

STARING DOWN A FULL-COURT MAN DEFENSE? SEND SOMEONE LONG

BASKETBALL COACH WEEKLY

Learn • Train • Develop • Enjoy

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DIFFUSE FULL-COURT PRESSURE

DO THESE 4 THINGS
EVERY TIME vs. A PRESS

CREATE A PAIR
OF CORNER
3-POINT-SHOT
OPTIONS

FLASH MIDDLE
WHEN FACING AN
EXTENDED ZONE

STOP PERPETUATING
THE 'SCHOLARSHIP MYTH'

▲ BE PREPARED
WHEN FACING A RICK
PITINO-LIKE DEFENSE



CONSIDER COACHING ANOTHER SPORT TO GAIN PERSPECTIVE

Stop Perpetuating The ‘Scholarship Myth’



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9325 SW Iowa Drive
Tualatin, OR 97062

Editor-in-chief
Michael Austin
michael.austin@basketballcoachweekly.com

Contributors
Matthew Mitchell, Felisha Legette-Jack (WBCA book), John O’Sullivan

Illustrations
Mike Renwick

Pictures
Action Images

Design
Jamie Leeson

Publisher
Kevin Barrow
kevin.barrow@greenstarmedia.net

Customer Services
Duncan Heard
duncanh@basketballcoachweekly.com

Managing Director
Andrew Griffiths



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To subscribe to Basketball Coach Weekly please contact Duncan Heard at Green Star Media Ltd, Meadow View, Tannery Lane, Bramley, Guildford GU5 0AB, UK.

You can contact Duncan via Skype at basketballcoachweekly or via email at duncanh@basketballcoachweekly.com

Sideline Stories

Last week I introduced you to John O’Sullivan who is in charge of the **Changing The Game Project**. He’s working incredibly hard to coaches become better teachers, leaders and role models for their athletes. He’s on-board with what we do at **Basketball Coach Weekly** and his information is pertinent, relevant and useful for our readers.

One area where he hits the nail on the head is the “Scholarship Myth”

“When players simply are hitting the hardwoods in the hope of a scholarship, chances are they are being set up for failure...”

perpetuated by parents of talented high school athletes, as well as their coaches in some instances.

In his book, “Changing The Game,” he offers this take on just how small the chances are of earning an athletic scholarship.

“The sad statistics indicate that while only three to five percent of high school athletes even play in college, an even smaller number receive athletic financial aid. About one in 1,000 high school athletes receives a college scholarship (most of them only partial).

“Unfortunately, even in the face of

those numbers, between 30 to 50 percent of youth sports parents believe their child is good enough to get a scholarship. This reality distortion is one of the effects of a youth sports culture that promises the latest bat, the newest shoe or the most elite camp will have college coaches knocking down your door with a big check in hand.”

As a coach, you want players to dream big and aspire to greatness. But, when players simply are hitting the hardwoods in the hope of a scholarship, chances are they are being set up for failure.

Encourage players to work their hardest, develop their skills and be an integral part of your program. If a scholarship happens to come, then so be it. But, the goal of youth and high school basketball should not be about financial gain but rather teamwork, camaraderie and life lessons only learned by being part of something greater than the individual.

College is expensive, everyone knows this, but so too is dumping thousands of dollars into gimmicks or companies suggesting their product or camp is sure to help your player get to the next level. That money probably is better spent on a college savings plan in the long run. Be up-front with parents about this.

“The entire economy of youth sports has shifted from ‘Play to have fun and be an athlete for life’ to ‘Play hard and get a financial return on my investment.’ We need to shift it back,” O’Sullivan concludes.



Michael Austin
Michael Austin
Editor-in-chief



Obtaining a Division I scholarship is a rarity even for the most gifted players

In this issue...

3 DEFLATE PRESSURE IN 4 STEPS

There are four ways to increase your chances of successfully breaking a full-court defense

4 ‘DIAMOND’ CUTS THROUGH PRESSURE

When facing a denial, man-to-man, full-court press, use a well-timed backscreen and send one player long

5 USE THE MIDDLE

The best way to thwart a full-court zone press is to send a player into an open pocket in the middle of the court

6 SUCCESSFUL SET: LEFT-CORNER 3-POINTER

Use a pair of low double screens to free two 3-point shooters on the left side of the court

QUICK HITTER COACH ANOTHER SPORT

When it comes to “specialization,” the conversation always turns to how youth and high school players should be competing in as many sports as they want. The idea is that specializing in a single sport at too young of an age more easily burns out the player and reduces the player’s love of the game.

The same can be true for coaches. While coaching has turned into a

year-round job with off-season camps, summer hoops, preseason preparations, etc., consider coaching another sport at your school to gain a unique perspective.

I’ve seen many head basketball coaches serving as a position coach on the football team as just one example. This allows the basketball coach to see first-hand how another person runs a program. Plus, it creates instances in

which the basketball coach is working with his players in a different setting.

If a team needs a coach, consider helping out. You will be doing a service to the school and obtaining valuable coaching experience outside the court, which will make you a better coach come hoops season.

- Michael Austin

Have several press breakers ready to go when facing a stingy, full-court defense



Deflate Pressure In 4 Steps

Full-court pressure relies upon chaos and confusion, slow down the game and build players' confidence when facing a suffocating defense

As you reach the higher levels of basketball, the full-court press rarely is used. Gifted ball handlers, smarter players and talented passers easily thwart the chaos created by full-court pressure.

But, at your level, whether it's high school or youth basketball, extending the defense to cover all 94 feet has a much higher success rate in forcing turnovers, taking the offense out of its game plan and generally causing mass confusion.

Unless you are coaching a top-tier point guard capable of dribbling or passing out of most scenarios, you need specific sets to counter man and zone pressure.

There are four keys points to remember regardless of the type of full-court pressure being faced:

MOVE TO THE MIDDLE

The sidelines and baseline act as another defender, which is the last thing your offense needs to encounter. Work the ball to the middle of the floor, which opens spacing on either side and creates wider passing lanes.

SEND SOMEONE LONG

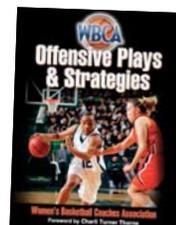
Keeping all five offensive players in the backcourt allows the defense to do the same. Now, there are 10 players in a small area, which squeezes passing lanes and make it more difficult to advance the ball. Even if you never have an open opportunity to throw a long pass to the front court, simply having one player positioned there on the move forces the defense to react.

SEND SOMEONE SHORT

While the goal is to move forward past the mid-court stripe, keep a capable dribbler behind the ball as a safety valve. If the dribbler has nowhere to go and the defense clamps down, typically a player positioned behind the ball is open ... and possibly has a chance to navigate past a scrambling defense.

GET THE BALL TO THE BEST FREE-THROW SHOOTER.

Beyond just when leading late, use this strategy in any circumstance. A full-court, pressure defense is aggressive and sometimes leads to more reach-in foul calls against defenders. You may steal a couple points even when possessing the ball 75, 80 or 90 feet from the basket.



'Diamond' Cuts Through Pressure

This press breaker looks for the long ball first, then settles into a multitude of options with 3 players coming toward the ball

WHY USE IT

This press breaker works well against a denial, man, full-court defense and is a good set when a late-game basket is needed against pressure.

SET UP

The point guard takes the ball out of bounds. The best free-throw shooter is located at the weak elbow.

HOW TO PLAY

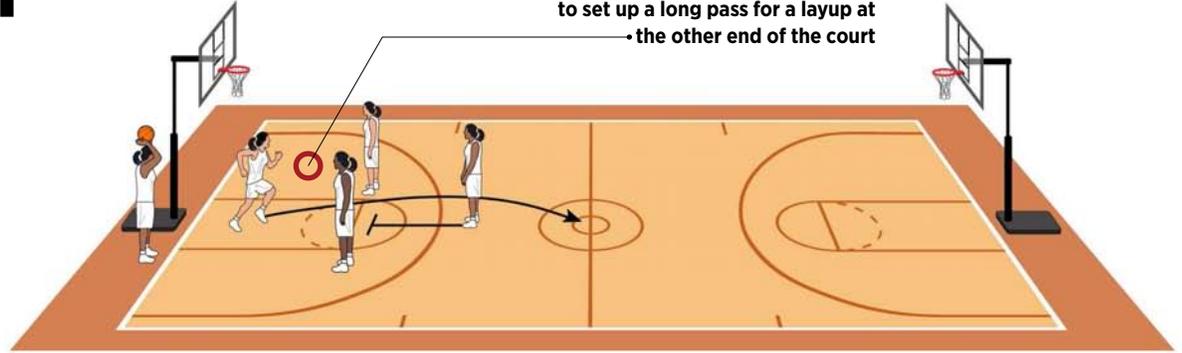
The player farthest from the ball sets a backscreen for the center, who is closest to the ball. If the defense is fronting, the center can break free toward the other end of the court [1]. The initial screener now sets a staggered screen with the ball-side elbow for the far-side-elbow player. That player curls around the staggered screen and catches the pass as the screeners roll to the ball [2]. The ball handler looks to either screener, both of which are breaking up the court at an angle toward the ball. The point guard is the safety option. If open, the ball handler simply dribbles up the court [3].

TECHNIQUE

With both screeners rolling toward the ball, the point guard has several solid options for inboundng the ball even if the first two (as diagrammed) aren't open. Keep the point guard back as a safety.

1

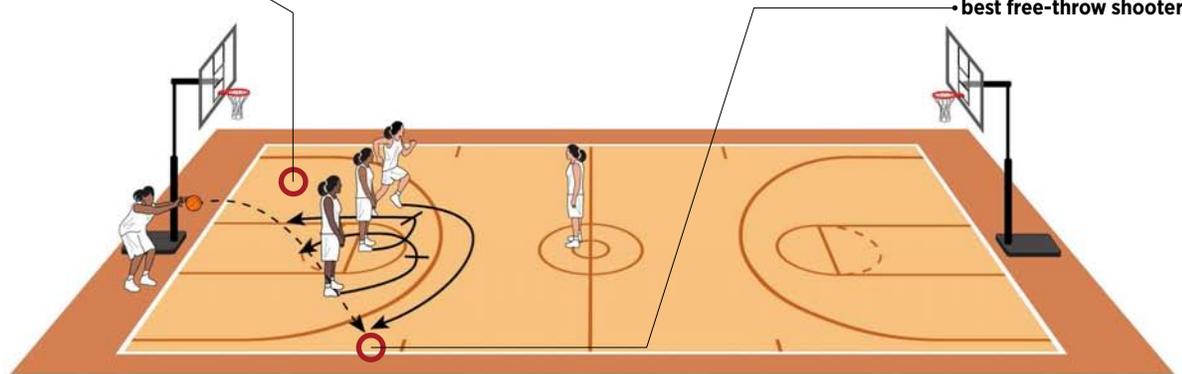
When defenders are fronting your offensive players, use a backscreen to set up a long pass for a layup at the other end of the court



2

Both screeners roll toward the ball to create additional inboundng options

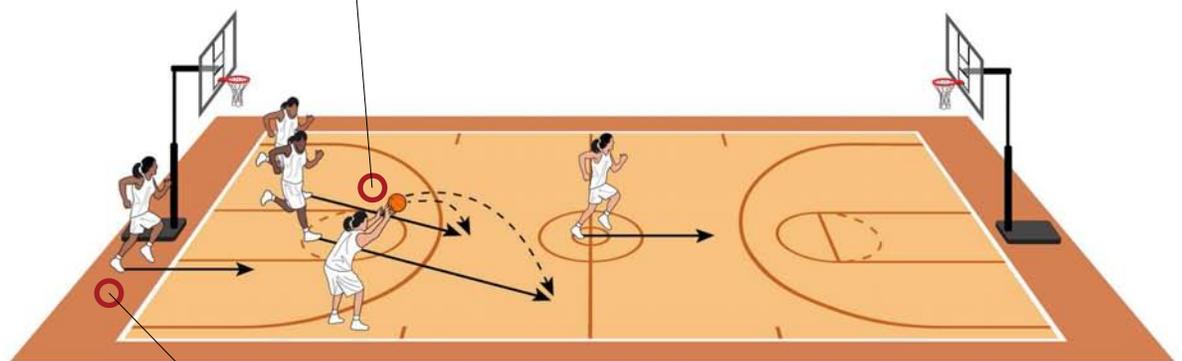
If the long pass isn't available, get the ball in the hands of this player, who should be your best free-throw shooter



3

The ball handler looks to either screener running down the court or has the option to dribble if not covered closely

The point guard serves as a reliable safety option if the pressure moves in the other direction



Player movement →

Ball movement - - - →

Dribble ~~~~~ →

Shot →

Pass To Middle, Open The Floor

Pressure defenses prey on ball handlers trapped near the sidelines, have a player flash from the front court to the middle and create several scoring options

WHY USE IT

This press breaker works best against a zone full- or three-quarter-court defense as the flashing player finds a gap in the floor's middle.

SET UP

Maximize your best ball handlers by having a less-skilled dribbler serve as the inbounder (typically a power forward). The player flashing to the middle needs good hands, solid dribbling skills and clear decision-making abilities.

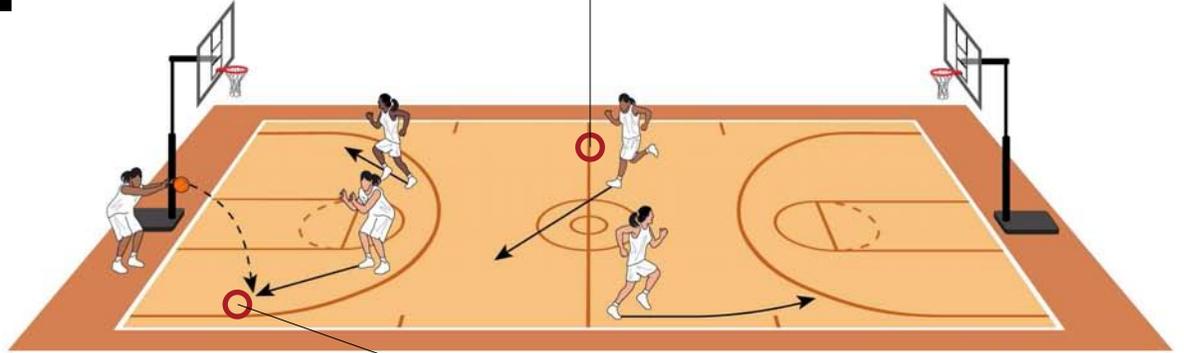
HOW TO PLAY

The guards positioned at the elbows flash to opposite corners. Try to get the ball to the point guard in the near corner. Then, the small forward flashes to the middle [1]. The point passes to the small forward. The opposite guard moves up the court while the inbounder serves as the safety [2]. The middle ball handler looks opposite to the streaking guard to break the pressure. If she isn't open, the ball handler has the option to dribble into the front court or pass back to the safety as the center occupies the middle [3].

TECHNIQUE

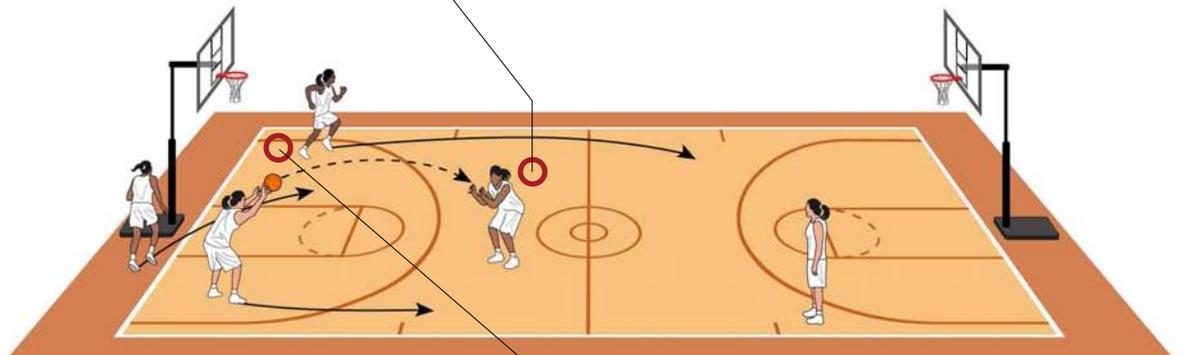
Work on the small forward's timing of the cut as well as securing the ball before looking to pass upcourt. Watch the center under the hoop for an easy score.

1 The small forward flashes from the weak side into the middle of the zone - find an open window where there are no defenders



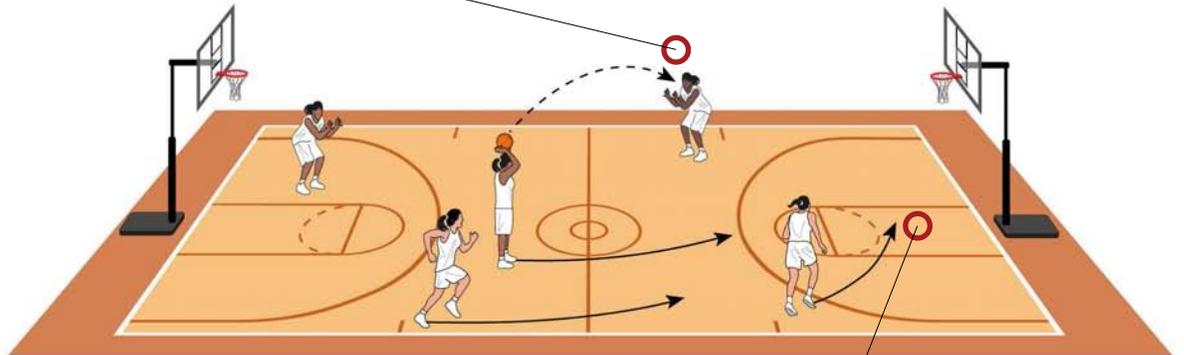
This is an easier pass than looking to the opposite corner and it allows a smoother pass to the middle

2 Secure the pass first, then look up the court - many players already are thinking of their next move before ensuring they have the ball



The inbounder serves as the safety valve, especially if the pressure move quickly into the front court

3 This is the ideal pass as it's opposite where the ball started and keeps the defense scrambling



The center occupies the middle and flashes to the ball with hands ready for a quick catch-and-shoot opportunity



Double-Option, Double-Screen Nets 3

Move two weak-side players low to set a double screen for a potential shooter, then use them again to do the same thing for a second shooter

WHY USE IT

This play creates an initial and a secondary 3-point shot opportunity. It works well because if the defense stops the initial action, it isn't expecting another shooter coming to the same corner.

SET UP

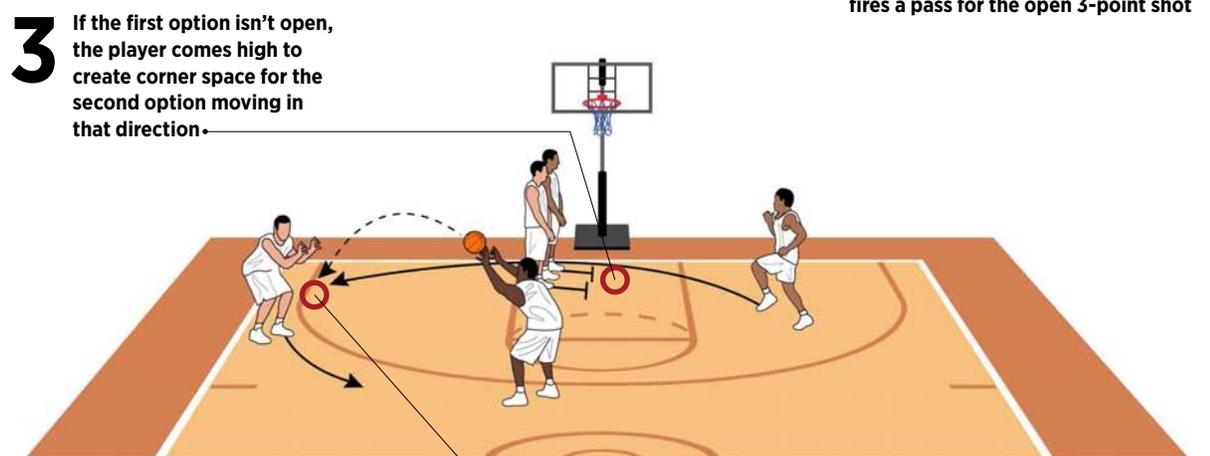
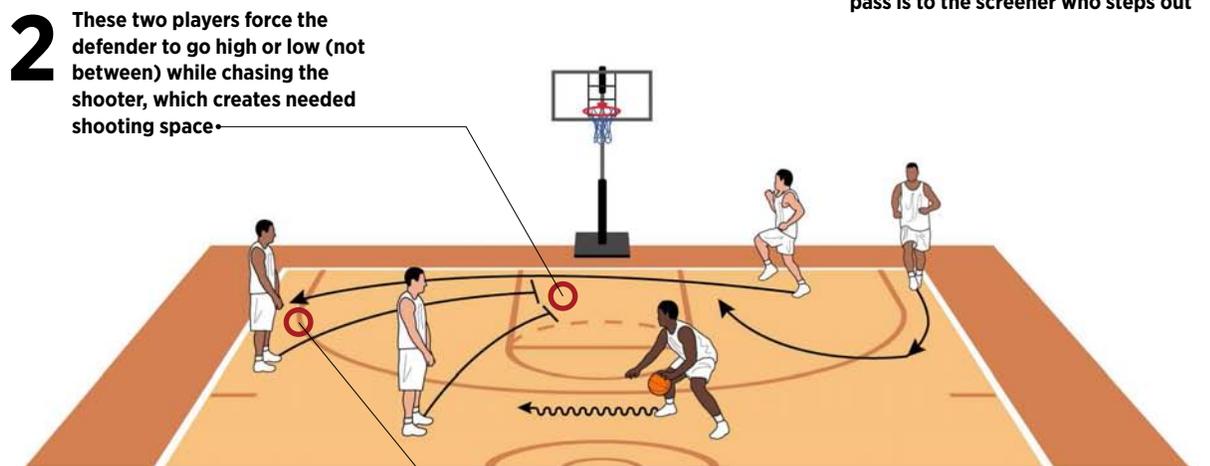
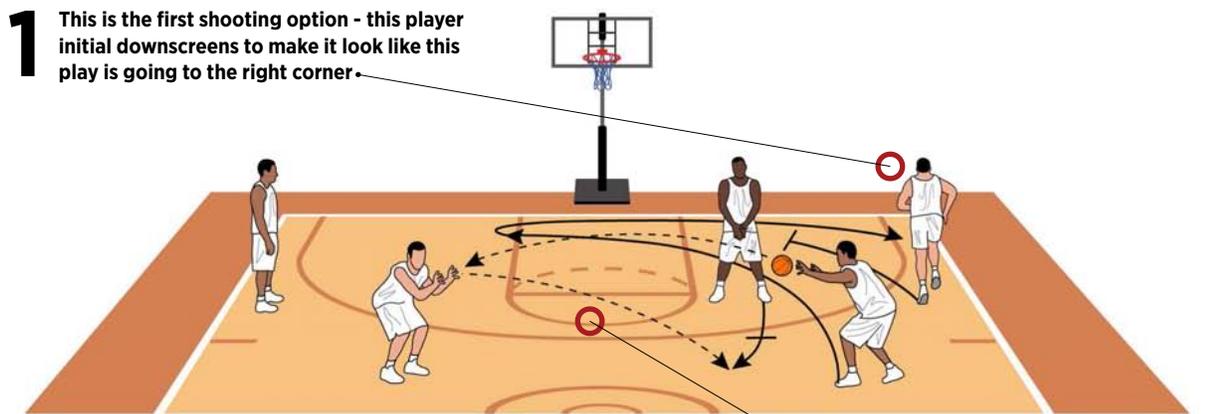
Four players are located outside the 3-point line with one player (who needs solid ball-handling and passing skills) at the ball-side elbow.

HOW TO PLAY

The guard passes across the court and cuts off the elbow player's screen. The screener steps out and receives a pass. The original ball handler moves to the ball-side corner [1]. The player with the ball dribbles left as the two weak-side players move low and set a double screen for the first potential shooter. The second shooter starts making his way into position [2]. The first look is to the shooter in the corner. If he's not open, then he moves to the left wing as the second shooter runs off a double screen into the corner [3].

TECHNIQUE

The weak-side players must work in tandem to pick off the trailing defenders and create enough separation for an open shot for either shooter.



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