

BRING IN A REF TO OFFICIATE SCRIMMAGE, SHED LIGHT ON CHANGES

BASKETBALL COACH WEEKLY

Learn • Train • Develop • Enjoy

October 9, 2014

Issue 55

\$5.99

DEMAND EARLY-SEASON DEFENSE

USE THESE 2 DRILLS DAILY

< CHRIS PAUL IS AN ALL-NBA DEFENDER DESPITE SIX-FOOT FRAME

STAND STRONG AGAINST ENTITLED PLAYERS, PARENTS

UNDERSTAND THE PROS, CONS OF THE TRIANGLE

TEACH YOUNG DEFENDERS HOW TO SLIDE



REBOUND, OUTLET, BREAK & CLOSE OUT IN ONE DRILL

Teach Triangle Offense To Youth?



**Basketball
Coach Weekly**
Issue 55

Basketball Coach Weekly
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Sideline Stories

The Triangle Offense is recognizable in name only. Say "The Triangle" to anyone in basketball circles and they immediately conjure up the names of Tex Winter and Phil Jackson. Try to get those same people to break down this philosophy and it's not so easy.

"It's not a flavor-of-the-week offense, so don't abandon it when it gets tough ..."

Recently, a reader asked if this offense is a viable one for youth basketball players. I pondered this under the guise of youth coaches focusing more on teaching the game to younger players rather than attempting to win games (that's my hope at the youth level anyway).

Based simply upon research, as I haven't spent any gym time with coaches who use this philosophy so I haven't seen it in person, my initial reaction is the Triangle is too advanced for youth players. You hear about the offense working at the highest levels of play, so it comes off as a style of play where experience is needed.

Plus, in this instant-gratification society in which we live today, the Triangle doesn't seem to fit. My feeling is it's a long process to install and requires players to understand many layers, therefore making it not as relevant for young players.

I also considered how youth transition defenses would struggle when running

the Triangle as inevitably a quick guard is positioned in the corner, making it much more difficult to retreat in transition. This could lead to plenty of layups for the opposition and frustration on your part.

But, I wanted to learn more so I reached out and heard from Arthan Gilder, the head coach of Kings Basketball, a youth program in Irving, Texas. He says he has used the Triangle for all his teams (he coaches 8U to 17U) since 2000.

"I swear by it because it has everything a player and a team needs to promote ball movement, screens, open shots and great quality shots," Gilder explains.

He does admit it takes a disciplined, focused and patient coach to run the Triangle at the youth level. "It's not a flavor-of-the-week offense, so don't abandon it when it gets tough."

Gilder offers three other keys pieces of advice before committing to the Triangle.

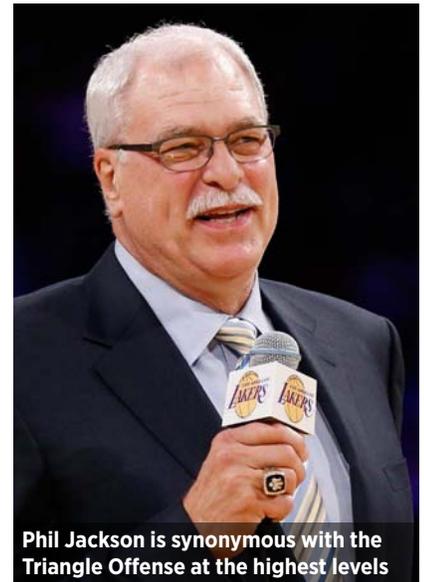
1. Study It. "Tex Winter and Phil Jackson have different variations from Geno Auriemma. Learn those variations and apply them to your team."

2. Don't Overload. "Drill the same Triangle options over and over with your players until they do it without thinking."

3. Limit Expectations. Different age groups handle different amounts of information. Gilder says his 8U teams learn four parts of the offense, his 10U learns six to eight parts, his 12U focuses on 10 to 14 parts, etc.



Michael Austin
Michael Austin
Editor-in-chief



Phil Jackson is synonymous with the Triangle Offense at the highest levels

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Players spend their summers working on offense — flip the focus back to defense by drilling it in early practices

4 BLIND REBOUND OUTLET

Work on rebounding, outlet passing, dribbling the length of the court and closing out on jump shots in this all-encompassing drill

5 SLIDE INTO POSITION

The defensive slide isn't as easy as it looks, yet it is a requirement to defend in a 1-on-1 situation

6 COACHES STAND STRONG

Lawnmower parents and entitled players are pushing great coaches out of the profession — don't become one of them

QUICK HITTER BRING IN A REF

In the June 19, 2004, issue of *Basketball Coach Weekly*, I broke down the four major basketball rules changes from the NFHS for the upcoming season complete with drills to help you educate players during those first practices of the season.

Now that the practice season is just about upon us, it's a good idea to review those changes

again and reach out to a referee you know, or the local officiating organization, to see if you can get a ref to a practice.

You can drone on about when to enter the free-throw lane now or how the intentional-foul call is changing, but until players see it for themselves, it doesn't carry as much weight. Having a referee on-hand at one of your

first scrimmages allows players to see how differently a game will be called for the upcoming season.

Plus, it's a benefit to the referee who gets to see how some of these new rules play out in live competition before having to make these calls in games that count. It's a win-win for everyone.

- Michael Austin

Chris Paul doesn't let his six-foot frame keep him from being one of the NBA's elite defenders



Demand Early-Season Defense

Players spend their summers working on offense — flip the focus back to defense by drilling rebounding, closeouts, slides and sprinting to recover

Despite standing just six feet tall, Chris Paul, the L.A. Clippers' point guard, was named to his third straight NBA All-Defensive First Team last season.

When watching Paul guard the ball, it's clear why he's earned this honor. He stays on top of his responsibility and slides his feet to maintain position better than anyone in the league. He challenges shots, typically on players several inches taller than him and he makes nothing easy on the offense. His coach, Doc Rivers, claims Paul is the best defensive point guard in the NBA right now ... and maybe ever.

While Paul is gifted with talent allowing him to stay in front of the quickest guards in the NBA, his defensive skills require constant

drilling and practicing.

Your players have the capability to work on their defensive positioning, sliding, closing-out and rebounding when you drill it properly.

To do so, check out the drills on the next two pages. The first is the perfect full-court drill because it sharpens skills in many areas. It starts with a player under the hoop facing away from the ball and grabbing a rebound wherever the ball may go.

The player immediately pivots and fires an outlet pass to a streaking ball handler heading up the court to simulate a fast break. At the other end, the quick-moving guard is greeted by a defender closing out from under the hoop to challenge the shot.

The second drill works on sliding for

keeping defensive position and sprinting to a spot when a step behind. In a 1-on-1 scenario, the first goal is to keep the ball handler in front by sliding feet and not crossing them. The slide motion doesn't come easy to younger players and it's a skill even experienced athletes need to better develop. If the feet cross, the offensive player wins as the defender either ends up on the ground or a step too slow.

Even the most gifted defensive slider still may need to regroup and sprint to a position when a ball handler gains position. This second drill works on this skill as well. Use both of these drills in early-season practices to hammer home your desire to develop relentless defenders.

Words by:
Michael Austin

Activities by:
Bert DeSalvo, head women's coach, Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, Conn.

Blind Rebound Outlet

Keep the rebounder in the dark about where the ball is going to work on game-like situations, then move into outlet passing and defending the pull-up jumper

WHY USE IT

Rebounders have their back to the ball on a shot in a game, so simulate the same scenario in practice.

SET UP

A rebounder is facing the hoop under the basket. You (or an assistant) have a ball at the free-throw line. Place a line of players at each wing ready for a potential outlet pass. Place a line of defenders under the hoop at the court's far end.

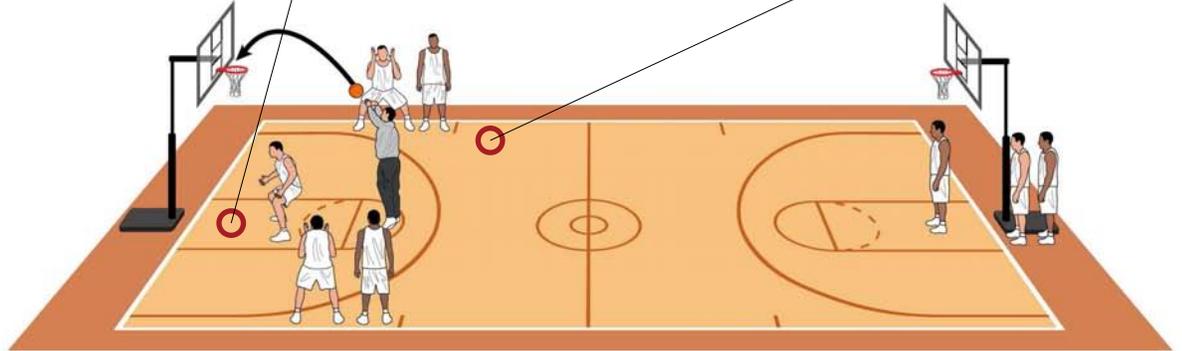
HOW TO PLAY

Shoot the ball hard with the intent to miss. The rebounder is in a boxing-out position and reacts quickly to the careening ball [1]. The rebounder grabs the ball with two hands and holds it as high as possible. He or she then outlets the ball with a front pivot (or front turn) to the ball-side wing player. The wing J-cuts to receive the ball with momentum. The catch is made and the ball handler dribbles hard up the floor as the first defender steps out [2]. The ball handler pulls up for a mid-range jump shot while the defender closes out with a hand up [3].

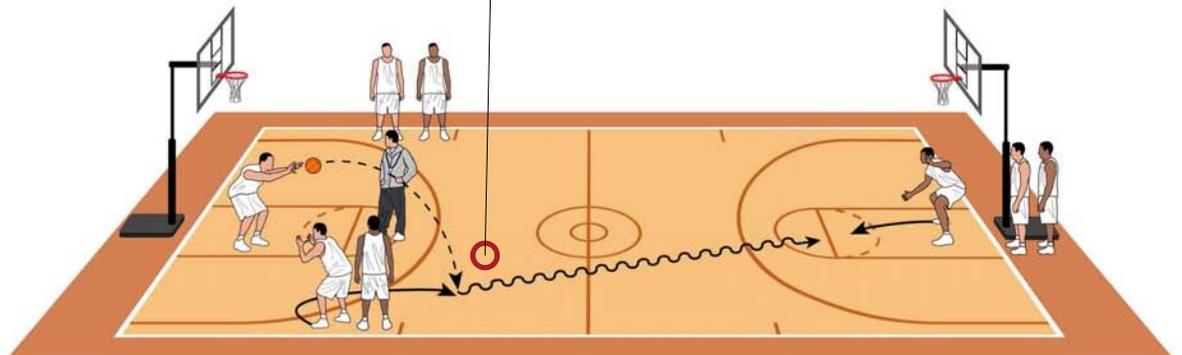
TECHNIQUE

In this instance the ball is caught on the right side of the rim, so the rebounder pivots on the right foot and throws a two-hand, over-the-head pass while stepping toward the receiver with the opposite foot.

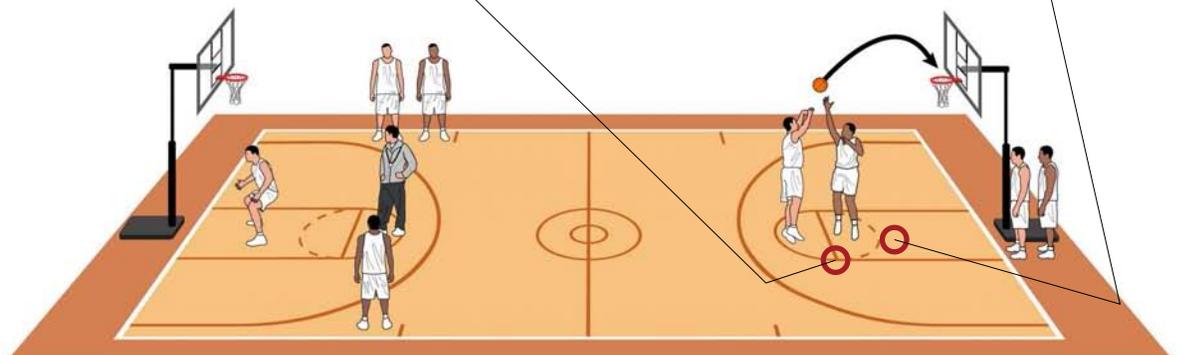
- 1** The rebounder faces the rim while executing a box-out - this simulates a game situation as the rebounder doesn't know the precise angle of the shot
- The first player in both wing lines are ready for a potential outlet pass



- 2** The wing on the ball side J-cuts to receive the ball with momentum and push up the floor quickly



- 3** Once the ball handler reaches the free-throw area, he or she pulls up for a jump shot
- The defender closes out quickly with a hand up in an attempt to alter the shot



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

Slide Into Defensive Position

A skill to work on every day in practice, the defensive slide isn't as easy as it looks, especially when facing a gifted ball handler

WHY USE IT

The defensive slide is a critical skill to contain dribble penetration. It requires excellent footwork and coordination, so needs to be drilled daily.

SET UP

A ball handler and defender are positioned in each corner. Designate one group as the ones to start.

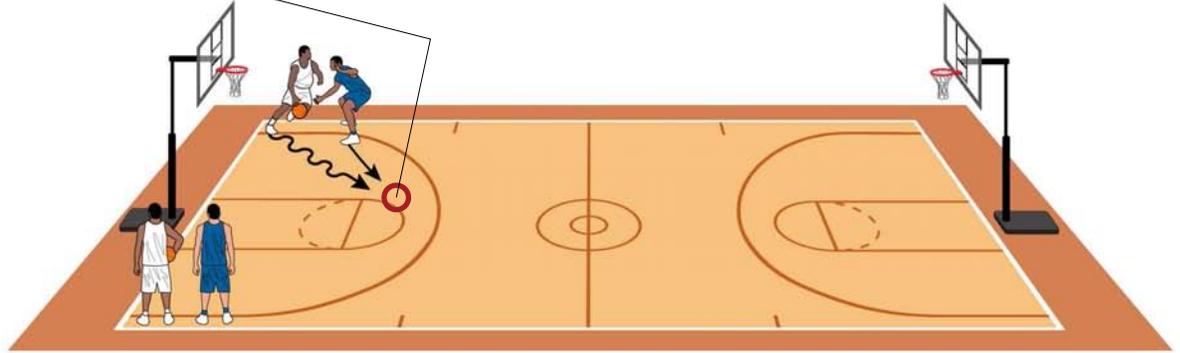
HOW TO PLAY

The ball handler dribbles at about 75 percent effort to the elbow as the defender slides to keep the defender in front [1]. The ball handler now speed-dribbles in the open court. The defender now is trailing the ball and sprints to a spot ahead of the ball handler. At the same time, the second group from the opposite corner begins the first phase of the drill [2]. Once the defender is back in front of the ball handler, the defender gets into the proper stance and slides the ball handler to the sideline [3].

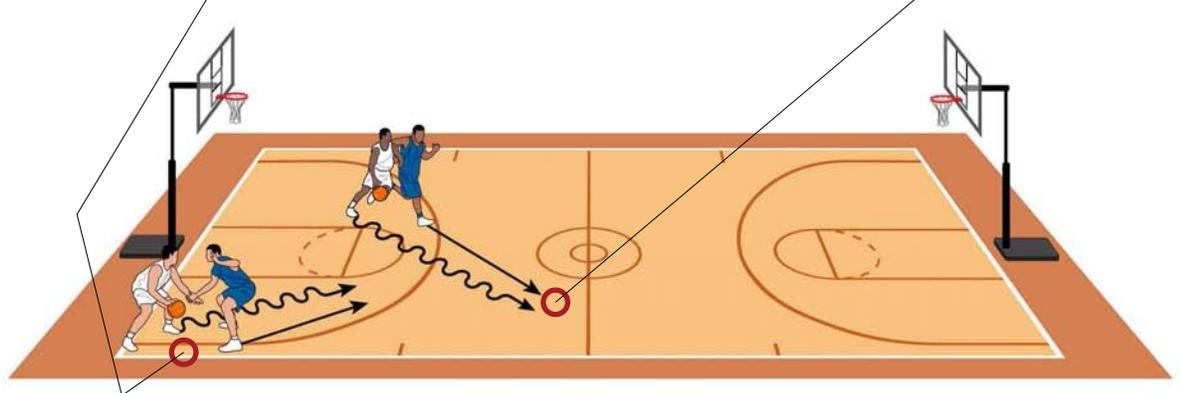
TECHNIQUE

Be sure the group in the opposite corner waits long enough as not to run into the initial group. You want to be efficient ... but also safe. To increase the difficulty of the drill, the ball handler can dribble back toward the rim to make the defender's recovering and square-up more challenging.

- 1** The ball handler dribbles at three-quarter speed toward the elbow as the defender slides to keep him or her in front

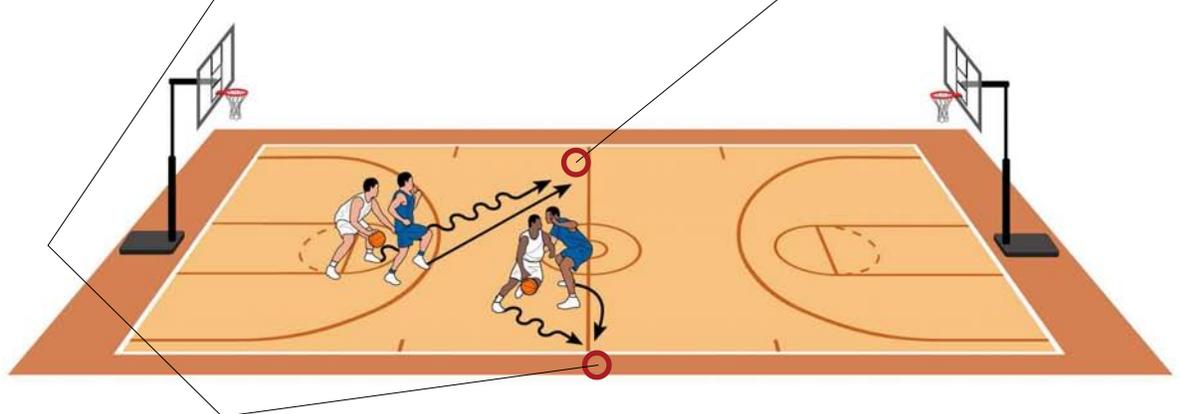


- 2** The second group waits for the first to clear through the free-throw area to avoid a collision



The ball handler now is in a full speed-dribble as the defender trails and attempts to regain position in front

- 3** Once in position, the defender moves into a defensive stance and slides the ball handler into the sideline



The second group is in the speed-dribble phase of the drill so the defender is scrambling to gain position at this point

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

Coaches who find ways to stick through the hard times are rewarded by players who love and appreciate them

Coaches Stand Strong

Lawnmower parents and entitled players are pushing great coaches out of the profession — don't let them win, fight back

When you are in the coaching profession, one of the things you learn early on is not to take things too personally. Your biggest fans when you win may become your biggest critics when you lose. Your players may love you one moment, and grumble the next, and it is important to maintain perspective and see the big picture even when they cannot.

If you are doing your job, your players and fans will not always appreciate the moment, but they will appreciate your great coaching years from now.

Recently I have read numerous articles about **longtime coaches resigning due to parent complaints** over things like playing time, selection for varsity or JV, and the like. I have **read about states passing legislation to protect coaches from parent complaints**. Then I read **this article about a former high school basketball player who was suing his former coach** and athletic director because he didn't get enough playing time. This is insane. This I took personally.

Sadly, in our current era of entitlement, parents think they are helping their children

by mowing down all obstacles (we call them Lawnmower Parents) in their child's march toward Ivy League schooling and college athletics. Our coaches of positive significance are becoming an endangered species. These amazing people who are willing to push children, to take him or her out of their comfort zone, to say "good, now do more," are being threatened by a minority of parents who are willing to yell loudly and make a big stink every time their precious little child faces some adversity.

Coaches, the professionalization of youth sports has made our jobs very difficult. The pressure we are under to win has never been greater. Never before have the difficult choices we face between developing players and developing people been placed under more scrutiny. We are constantly second guessed by pseudo experts who are willing to invest the time and energy to remove us from their child's path to stardom.

Being a coach of positive significance has never been harder. But it has never been more important!

A person called coach, who creates an

environment of love and respect to teach children about sport and life, has never been more important than it is today.

It is easy to put up a wall, to shut your door and say it's my way or the highway, in order to keep out all the riff raff and just coach. But please don't.

Don't let the vocal minority push you out of something you love. Keep teaching, keep mentoring, and keep modeling good behavior for your players. Those players whose parents are the most troublesome are the ones who need you the most, because they are not getting it at home.

Never stop learning and improving yourself. If you are a new coach, find a mentor. There is no more powerful way to improve your coaching than by connecting with a coach who has been there and done it before. This is a necessary part of your education, yet one that many coaches never get.

Keep educating yourself. You do not know it all, you do not know enough. You can always improve. This is what we tell our players, and we need to take our own advice.

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