

Building Your Half Court Man to Man Defense
Taking your opponent out of their offensive comfort zone
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Philosophy

Our primary goal on defense is to hold our opponent to a low FG%, force turnovers and limit them to one shot. There are many ways to accomplish that and they all work. For my team, what has worked best is to play defense with the goal of trying to make our opponent do things on offense that they aren't comfortable doing. When you are working with your team on offense, my guess is that you spend 80% of your offensive practice time working on Plan A. You will work on Plan B a little and most of us don't have time for a Plan C. I have played teams that clearly don't have a Plan B much less a Plan C. Our goal is to figure out what your Plan A and B are and to do anything we can to make you go away from what you spend the most time practicing. Our base defense is the opposite of Pack Line, (although we are capable of adapting our defense to Pack Line if the need arises), we are aggressive and we physically take options away from you.

We will always teach the most aggressive components of our defense as the base, it is my belief that we can easily adapt to the less aggressive style. Below are two examples:

1. In our base defense--we will deny all passes--it is an easy adjustment to go to a Pack Line style defense
2. In our base defense--we will hedge hard and fight over ball screens--once this is ingrained, it is very easy to add switching or hedging and going under the screen

Our players default will always be the base defense concepts. We have had great success having them go to less aggressive techniques in the middle of games.

First Thing's First

It doesn't matter what style of defense you play, your players **must have a good defensive stance, use great footwork to slide effectively and know how to closeout.** We will work on these first and make sure the players have a pretty good understanding of these before we move on. In our situation as we begin practice, we will spend 15-20 minutes out in the hallway warming up. I will take part of that time instructing these three things and working on them. They are a great way to get moving before you do your stretching.

Stance and Footwork and Closeouts--Guarding the man with the ball

It is my belief that many coaches gloss over these fundamentals and that is a big mistake. These are the building blocks for everything else we will do.

1. Stance **must be balanced** and feet a little wider than shoulder width. Head needs to be centered. Hands need to be in their proper position.
2. Footwork
 - a. Feet never get closer together than 12 inches (balance)
 - b. If I am going to my right, the left foot is my power foot
 - c. You need to learn when to slide and when to run
 - d. Weight should stay centered in your feet
 - e. No reaching and no lunging (balance)
 - f. If you are guarding the ball--**it must always be pressured!**
3. Closeouts
 - a. Sprint, sprint, slide
 - b. Finish low, short, with a hand covering the ball
 - c. Feet set up to force sideline-baseline

Drills to Build These Skills

1. Stance and Footwork
 - a. Group Slide
 - b. Panther Slide
 - c. Turn the dribbler
 - d. 1 on 1 full court (competitive)
2. Closeouts
 - a. 2 man closeout
 - b. Around the world 1 on 1
 - c. Roll Ball
 - d. 5 Man box-out

Time to teach the whole defense

Once the basic skills of stance, footwork and closeouts are taught, we will teach the whole. This is done primarily with shell drills and then followed up with breakdown drills that will be more live action.

4-man Shell

Rules

1. Deny 1 pass away
2. On-ball defenders must always be pressuring ball, players off the ball must see man/ball and form a flat triangle
3. Force ball handler sideline-baseline (defender's butt should face basket)
4. Block any cutter attempting to cut toward the basketball (give and go, flash)
5. Full front post when ball is below FT line extended, $\frac{3}{4}$ deny low post when ball is above FT line extended, high posts(any player above first hash above block) are $\frac{3}{4}$ denied on low side
6. Players power jump in the direction of every pass--the goal is to get to their next spot on the catch
7. We will hedge and fight over ball screens--hedger must show # and communicate
8. On down screens--we will open up and fight through--communication!

Drills

1. Position Check
2. Help and Recover
3. Defending down screens--Box drill
4. Deny the flash--wing deny
5. Defend the give and go
6. Defending ball screens
7. Add a post
8. Weak side rebounding

Breakdown drills for shell drill concepts

1. 7 in 1 drill
2. 4-man post defense drill
3. Jump to the ball drill
4. 3-man weave--defending ball screens

Putting it together live

Cut throat drills

1. Regular Cut Throat
2. 8 pass--no dribble
3. 4 vs. 6 (scramble)
4. 4 vs. 5 (scramble)

More live drills

1. 5 on 5 live shell (scramble)
2. Red Zone (4 on 4)
3. 35 Second Perfection (4 on 4)
4. Change (5 on 5)
5. 3 Stops and out (4 on 4)
6. Wahlert Drill