

Basketball Coach Handout

Defending Screens & Cutters

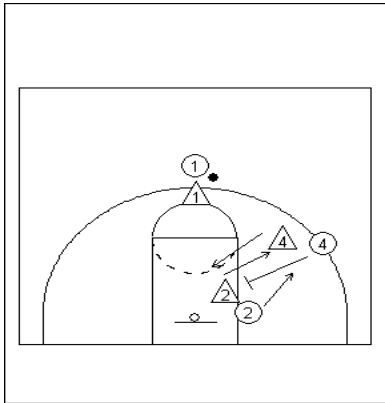
Defending Screens

A. Defending the Down Screen

1. By going ball-side on a screen, the defender (Triangle 2) slides over the screen to his man (Circle 2), going between the ball and the screener (Circle 4).
2. The person defending the screener (Triangle 4) must leave a gap for his team-mate (T2) to fight over the screen (C4). The player defending the screener (T2) always defends the basket.
3. Help might come in the form of T4 simply lagging a moment on top of the screen with the arm extended to discourage an immediate pass to the cutter (C2) while the cutter's defender (T2) fights through.

Key Points:

- Players must communicate. Let teammates know the screen is coming.
- Using proper, player-to-player defensive positions, try to avoid the screen altogether.
- If help is required, help & recover quickly.
- The defender being screened must always roll towards the ball with their hand up. This player needs to look big and cut down the passing angle.
- The player guarding the ball must put a great deal of pressure on the ball to make the pass to the cutter or the screener as difficult as possible and the passing lane hard to see.
- Defenders should see the ball and their players at all times.



B. Defending the Back Screen

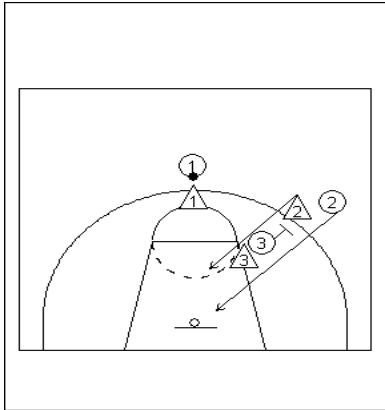
1. T3 (Triangle 3) gets as close to C3 (Circle 3) as possible, leaving T2 plenty of room to get through the screen. As an option, depending on the offensive player, T3 may drop off C3 and put a hand in the passing lane until T2 recovers C2. T3 then recovers to C3.
2. T2 rolls off the screen toward the ball with their hand up in the passing lane.
3. T3 will help T2 if C2 flares or kicks back off the screen.
4. If C2 does flare or kick back, T3 & T2 need to help and recover quickly.

Key Points

- Players must communicate. Let teammates know the screen is coming.
- Using correct defensive positioning according to the ball and their defensive assignment, try to avoid the screen altogether.
- If help is required, help & recover quickly.
- The defender being screened must always roll towards the ball with their hand up. This player needs to look big and cut down the passing angle.
- The player guarding the screener can help slow the offensive player using the screen by bumping the cutter.
- The player guarding the ball must put a great deal of pressure on the ball to make the pass to the cutter or the screener as difficult as possible and the passing lane hard to see.
- Defenders should see the ball and their players at all times.

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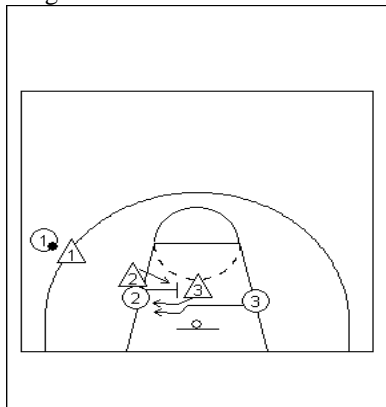
C. Defending the Cross Screen

In guarding cross screens in the post area, you want to emphasize to your guards to apply great pressure to the passer to discourage or disrupt the timing of the offensive team.

C2 (Circle 2) goes to set a cross screen for C3 (Circle 3). T2 (Triangle 2) turns and slightly angles their back to the ball. Here, vision is critical. As C2 goes to screen, T2 (Triangle 2) communicates with T3 about the screen.

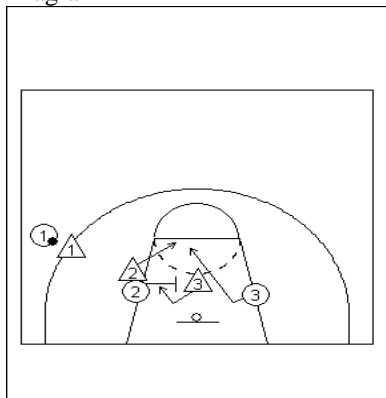
1. If C3 decides to go low off the screen, T3 must fight low and chest C3 as they cut to the ball. T3 must remember to maintain a ball-player-man relationship. T2 follows C2 across the lane in parallel stance and stays on the high side (Diagram 1).

Diagram 1



2. If C3 decides to cover over the top of the screen, have them switch. T3 must always fight to the low side on any cross-screen situation in the post. C3 uses the screen and decides to cut high off the cross screen. T2 calls "switch high!" T3, who should be on the low side, now takes C2 as T2 has switched to C3 (Diagram 2).

Diagram 2



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D. Defending the Screen 'n Roll (Pick 'n Roll)

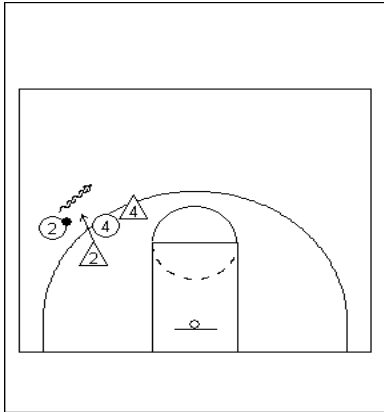
We defend the Screen 'n Roll two ways. 90% of the time we will hedge and get through but we also, depending on the opponent, can double the dribbler and zone up.

1. Without Doubling the Screen 'n Roll

- T2 (Triangle 2) & T4 (Triangle 4) take up correct defensive positioning according to the ball and their defensive assignments.
- C4 (Circle 4) sets an on-ball screen for C2 (Circle 2). C2 tries to use the screen and get to the basket.
- T4 gets to the high side of the screen, forcing the ball handler to take an arched path to the basket (hedging).
- T2 turns and sprints through the screen and beats the ball handler to the spot, not allowing them to turn the corner and get to the basket.
- T4 has helped and must recover quickly as T2 recovers back to the ball.

Key Points:

- Good timing as well as good communication between defenders is essential.
- The screener's defender hedging must be at a 90 degree angle to the direction the ball handler is heading. If the body position is too open, the dribbler will have a direct path to the basket.
- The defender on the ball must turn and sprint through the screen to the spot the ball handler is heading (sliding is too slow).
- The screener's defender must never lose touch with their defensive assignment. They should keep one hand on the screener's hip and the other out, up & wide.



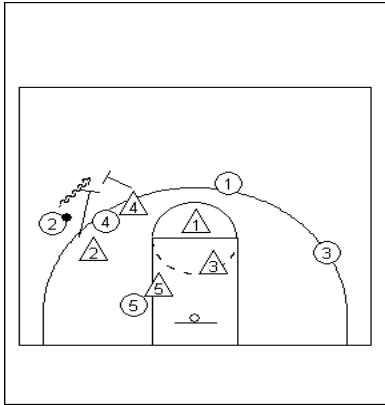
2. Doubling the Screen 'n Roll

- T2 (Triangle 2) & T4 (Triangle 4) take up correct defensive positioning according to the ball and their defensive assignments.
- C4 (Circle 4) sets an on-ball screen for C2 (Circle 2). C2 tries to use the screen and get to the basket.
- When the screen is set, T2 immediately shifts to force C2 to their high side to use the screen. T2 should prevent C2 from dribbling to the low side of the court. T4 moves above C4, into a hedge position, to prevent C2 coming off C4's screen. T4 should be close enough to C4 so their feet are either touching or overlapping a little.
- C2 attempts to dribble to the basket, either to the left or the right. T2 & T4 should prevent this by closing in on player C2, so their options are to retreat dribble or to pick up the ball.
- When a dead ball occurs, T2 & T4 close in and prevent a pass out of the double team attempting to get a 5 second count.
- The other three defenders need to rotate and help cover the other 4 players looking to steal any passes.

Key Points

- Defenders must keep their knees bent, bums down, and shuffle their feet when trapping. Do not reach to get the ball.
- The defenders priority should be to prevent getting split by the offensive player with the ball.

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Defending Cutters

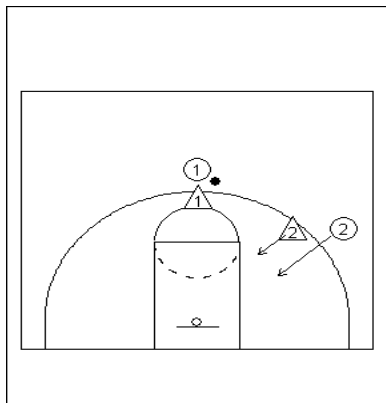
1. When the opponent you are closely guarding on the perimeter passes the ball, you must move off your opponent in the direction of the pass. This is called *jump to the ball*. Jumping to the ball positions you to defend a give and go cut by your opponent and to give help on the ball.
2. It is important that you move on the pass to establish ball-you-man position. If you wait for your opponent to cut before you move, you will get beat. The pass and cut is the most basic offensive play in basketball. It is as old as the game itself.
3. Be in a strong, balanced stance, ready to withstand any contact that may occur as you prevent the cutter from going between you and the ball. This is called *bumping the cutter*.
4. When an offensive player cuts to the ball or basket, the defender makes contact with the forearm extended at 45 degrees at the elbow. Upon contact with the forearm and deflecting the cutters angle to the ball, you must release pressure but maintain physical contact with the cutter.
 - a. If the arm is further flexed toward the body at 90 degrees a foul is often called for holding a cutter.
 - b. On the other hand failure to extend the forearm and make contact will result in the defender losing spacing and control of the cutters angle. This leads to the cutter using their body or arms against a tight defender to gain an advantage on the cut.
5. Bumping and releasing a cutter alters the cutter's route and sends the cutter to an area of the court where their cut is no longer threatening.

NB. See Handout 'Team Defensive Skills No.' for further explanation on *Jumping to the Ball & Bumping the Cutter*.

A. Defending the Back Cut

When the offensive player cuts to the basket and we are in a one pass away denial stance, we will "head snap, arm snap" instead of opening up to see the ball.

Triangle 2 will just turn his head and switch from his left arm denying to his (inside) right arm denying the pass to 2.



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B. Defending the Flash Cut

The weak side defender must be constantly aware of when both his man and the ball are. Any time his man moves to the middle of the court, this defender must step up with his inside foot to establish a position of denial- the base kept wide, knees bent, and inside hand in the passing lane.

The other arm is used as a bar to keep the cutter away from his body, and the feet move to beat the cutter to a spot, forcing him to alter his final destination. Effectively shutting off the flash cut will force the offensive player to back cut to the basket. This move is countered by the “head snap, arm snap” method mentioned in the section above “Defending the Back Cut.”

