

# Basketball Coach Handout

## Transition Offense

"Transition Offense" refers to the process of changing from defence to offense. Your transition offense can be a slow, walk-it-up-floor transition, an aggressive fast break transition, or something in between. Each coach has to decide which is best for his team and his personnel.

### An aggressive up-tempo style has advantages:

1. The fast break can produce easy scores.
2. Pushing the ball up the floor quickly puts pressure on the opponent, and they will be constantly worrying about getting back on defence. This thinking may cause them to be less aggressive going for their offensive rebounds, and may keep their point guard from penetrating (thinking he has to stay back to prevent the fast break).
3. An aggressive team attitude on offense will often carry over to your defence and rebounding.
4. An up-tempo game will favour the team that is well-conditioned. A poorly conditioned team will "run out of gas" by the fourth quarter.
5. The fast break will often break the opponent's press defence.
6. A team that plays up-tempo will usually use more of its bench players, with frequent substitutions. This often creates good team harmony with many players getting playing time. An up-tempo game will favour the team with a "deep bench", with many good substitute players.
7. The players and fans enjoy a well-played up-tempo game.

### Transition Offensive Concepts

The most important rule to inculcate in your players' minds is to always keep under control. You don't want your fast-breaking style to result in turnovers and missed opportunities to score. They have to learn to recognize when to push the break, and when to slow down and stay under control. They must learn not to force bad passes. Some teams like to push the break every opportunity they can (after a steal, defensive rebound, an opponent's score, etc). Some teams only push it up after a steal or a score, or only certain times of the game.

Although this is very basic, young players learning the game must be taught how to transition from defence to offense. Kids must be taught that when an inside, tall player gets a defensive rebound, he/she should immediately look to pass to a guard, a good ball-handler, to get the ball up the court, even if you are playing a slow-down game. Teach your ball-handlers that on every defensive rebound, they must move into a position quickly where the rebounder can pass to them. Coaches often assume kids know this, but like every other fundamental in the game, it must be taught. Rebounders should be taught to take care of the ball after a defensive rebound and make a clean, simple pass to a guard. So often, I see kids work hard for the rebound, only to lose it with a careless outlet pass. Impress your kids that the opponent is often "lurking around" to steal those outlet passes.

Also, some coaches like to assign the same person (usually a post player with good passing skills) to be the inbounds passer each time a basket is made, or the ball is out-of-bounds. The post players should be taught to get down the floor and allow spacing and room for the guards to bring the ball up.

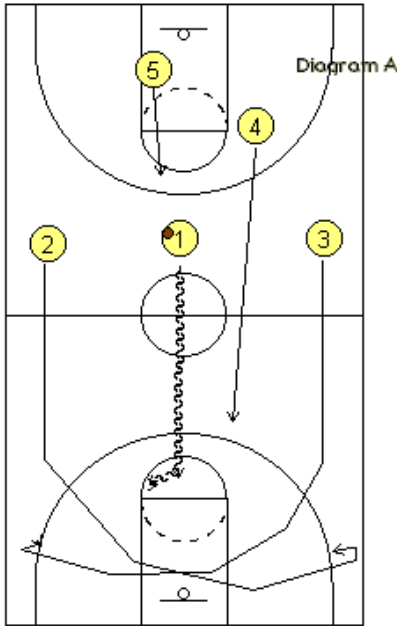
### Primary Fast Break

There are different ways of running the transition offense, but most methods use the idea of filling three lanes coming up the floor, a "trailer", and a "prevent" person (Diagram A). The guards, or small forward should run the three lanes. One lane is straight up the middle of the floor, and the other lanes are along each sideline. Some coaches feel that it doesn't matter which player is in which lane, but just fill each lane position as quickly as possible and "go!" Other coaches teach that the outlet pass always goes to the point guard (the team's best ball handler) in the centre, and the outside lanes, trailer and prevent position are assigned to individual players, so each one knows his role. If the break doesn't develop, then just bring it up slowly and avoid the turnover that can happen by getting the ball into the wrong person's hands.

Preferably, the ball will be in the centre lane, although the break can be run from the wing and can be run with only two lanes filled (as after a quick mid-court steal). The centre person should dribble the ball all the way to the free throw lane, and should not make any unnecessary passes prior to that point. The two outside lanes should cut at 45 degrees to the hoop for a pass from the point, and the lay-up. If the point guard pops the free throw jumper, the wings should crash the boards for the rebound. If neither happens, the wings should cross under the basket and fill the opposite corner or wing, and the point guard should move to the right side of the free throw circle. Next the "trailer" should cut through the left side of the lane, expecting the pass. The "prevent" player should come up the floor slowly, making sure no opponents are behind him. He prevents the opponent from taking it to the hoop should they steal or intercept the ball. If nothing develops from the break, the team then flows into its usual half-court offensive set.

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### Starting the break

Coaches differ on how to start the break off a defensive rebound. Some prefer the outlet pass to go to a guard out on the wing (free throw line extended). This guard can either pass to the other guard who is filling the centre lane, or dribble quickly and fill the centre lane himself.

Other coaches teach getting the outlet pass directly to the point guard in the centre of the floor. If you can get this pass through, this is certainly the fastest and easiest way to get the break going, and avoids a dangerous pass to the wing, and a centring pass. It also gets the ball into the hands of your best ball-handler. The point guard should come to the pass, pivot and start the speed dribble up the floor, while the other guard and small forward fill the outside lanes.

A successful fast break depends on:

1. Getting the defensive rebound.
2. A good, quick outlet pass.
3. Filling the lanes.
4. Maintaining control. "Be quick, but never hurry."
5. Recognition. Don't force the break or pass if it is not there.

### Secondary Break

When the primary fast break is not possible, consider using a secondary break. Having a secondary break is often helpful in getting quick baskets in transition, before the defence can get down the floor. Also a good secondary break can flow directly into your half-court offense. A good use of the secondary break is after the opponent scores, and we inbound the ball quickly and get it moving up the floor. You can even use this as a press breaker if you get it in quickly, before the press has time to get set.

After the opponent scores... (See Diagram A)

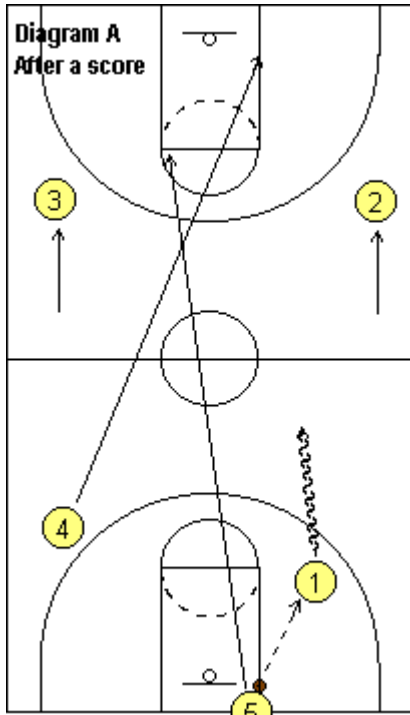
#### Keys Points:

1. Get the ball out of the net quickly and pass in-bounds immediately to the point guard (#1), your best ball-handler.
2. #2 and #3 sprint down the sidelines into the forecourt.
3. #1 will either speed dribble the ball up the floor, or make the long pass to #2 or #3.

Then there are a number of options as outlined below.

1. #5 always makes the in-bounds pass, and after a made basket, should quickly get the ball out of the net (don't wait for it to hit the floor), step out-of-bounds, and quickly get the pass into #1. Don't waste time and let the defence get their press set.
2. Notice how the floor is spread, with #1 and #2 on the right, and #4 and #3 on the left.
3. #2 and #3 should get down the floor. #4 plays opposite of #1.
4. #5 will be the trailer coming down the floor last.
5. #4 will cut to the ball-side block.
6. #5, the trailer, comes last and goes to the opposite side elbow.
7. There are many options depending on what the point guard finds open.

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**The options are:**

1 all the way

If nobody stops her, #1 can take it all the way to the free throw line for a nice 3-on-1 break.

1 to 2

1 passes long up the side to 2, who takes it to the hoop.

1 to 3

1 passes long to 3, who takes it to the hoop.

1 to 4

1 passes long to 4 (going to the ball-side block), who takes it to the hoop.

1 to 5

1 passes to the trailer 5, at the elbow.

1 to 2 to 4

1 passes to 2. 2 passes to 4 down on the low block.

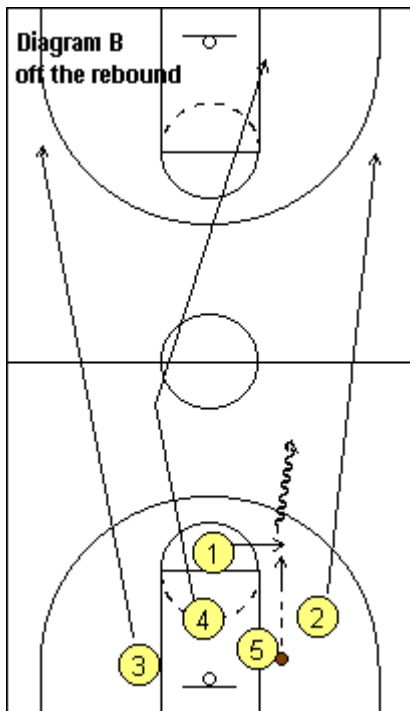
1 to 2 to 5

1 passes to 2. 2 passes to 5 at the elbow.

1 to 2 to 5 to 3

1 passes to 2. 2 passes to 5 at the elbow, and 5 passes to 3 cutting to hoop.

If nothing develops, then flow into your half court offense.



**After a rebound...** (See Diagram B)

Everyone goes for the defensive rebound. As soon as the rebound is secured, #2 releases up the right side-line, #3 sprints up the left side-line, and #1 comes to the top, ball-side for the outlet pass. Usually the defensive guard that plays "back on defence" will back-pedal to the centre of the court. By having #2 and #3 wide on the sidelines, you should be able to get the pass down floor.

#1 pushes the ball up the floor, or can make the long pass to either #2 or #3.

#4 runs the same pattern as in diagram A, and #5 becomes the trailer again. You could reverse the roles for #4 and #5, depending on who gets the rebound... allowing the re-bouncer to be the trailer.

The patterns and options are the same in both situations, so it is not difficult to learn this secondary break.