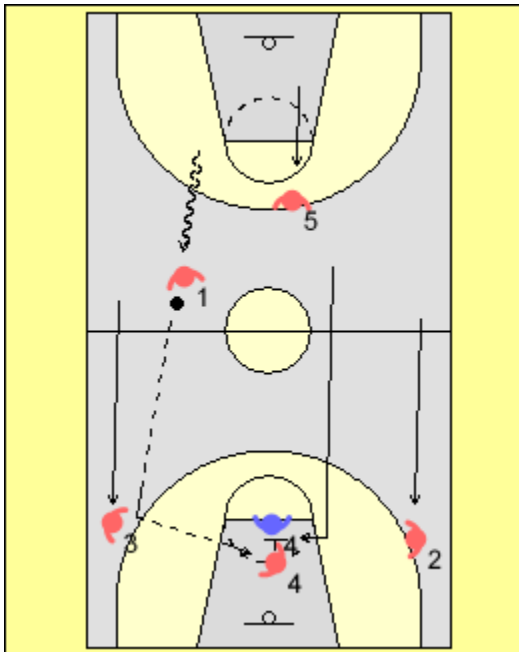


Mike McKay - Manager of Coach Education and Development
Post play – rethinking the strategy

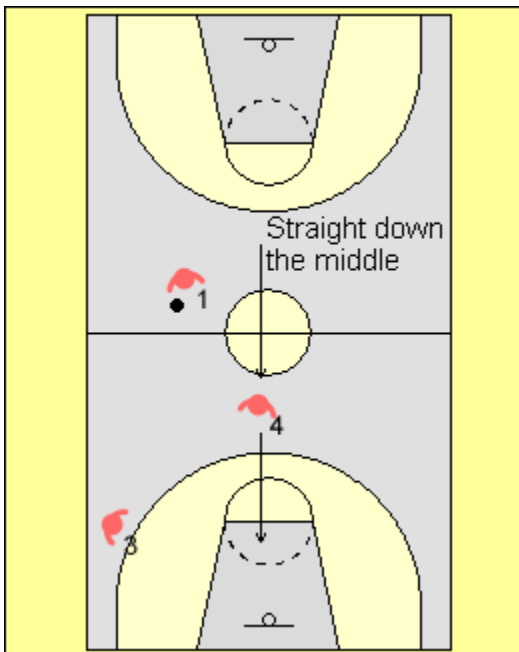


I have had the opportunity to observe a number of coaches playing with FIBA rules for the first time. In general things are looking good. Coaches have recognized that they must allow players to play. One area where coaches may need to rethink their strategy is with post play. Hopefully this will encourage coaches to think about their current post strategies.

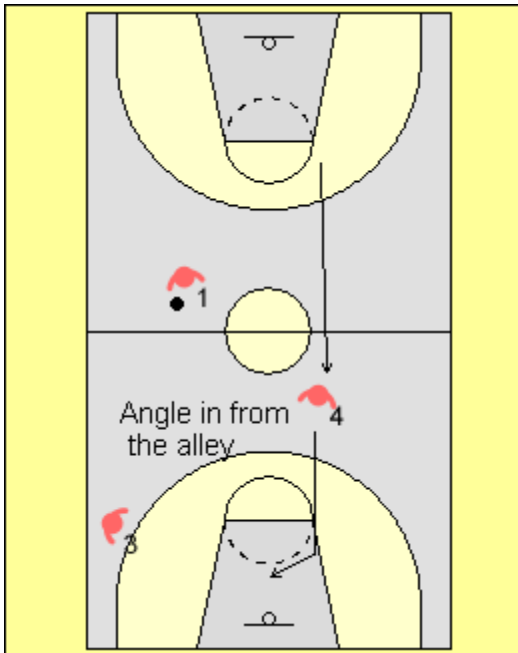


Posting in transition

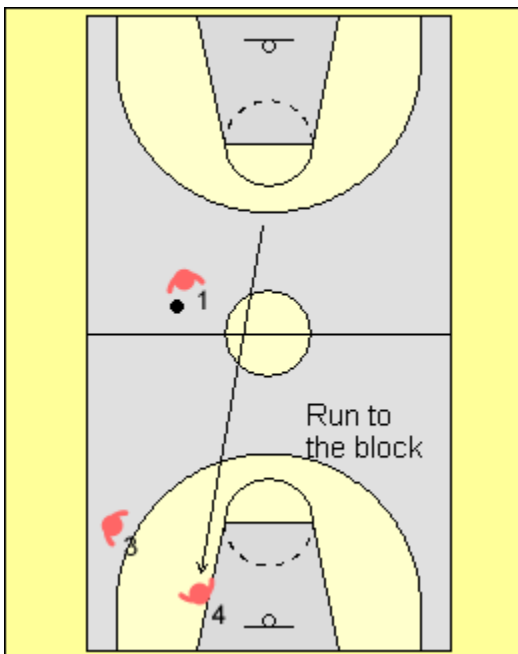
Many teams use the strategy of a player running to the front of the rim in transition, often called “First Big”. The idea is to beat the defense down the floor and to seal the defense in the key so you can create an easy score. In the example shown the player is sealing the defense on the high side. It does not always have to be a post player. Teams with all perimeter players will often have the first player down the floor go to the basket. Teams that play a more 5 out offense will only go to the rim if the basket is open.



Some coaches want the player to take the shortest path to the basket. The advantage is that you will get there quicker and there is little confusion. The disadvantage is that it creates difficult passing angles at times. It is also harder to see the ball and your defender when running a straight line. The over the shoulder catch is not an easy one to make.



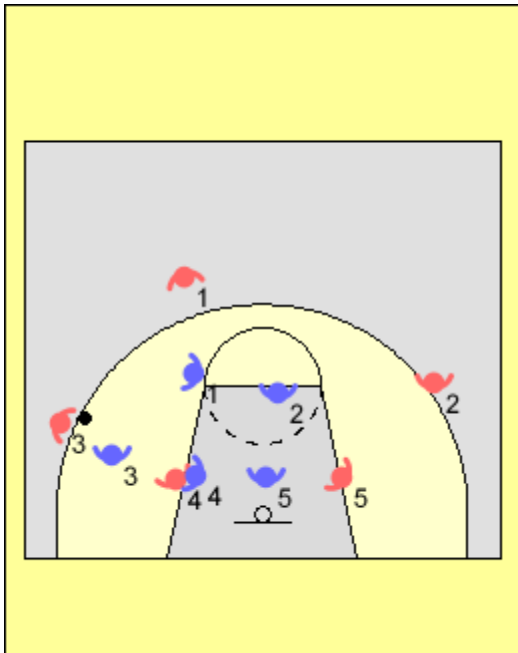
Other coaches prefer that the athlete run the alley to create a better angle. It is slower and there can be confusion as to which alley to run. It does afford the player the ability to set up the defender at the end of the run. Also there is a better passing angle for the lead pass.



Be careful of having the player run directly to the block. Especially with the FIBA key this is not always a great place to score from quickly. Often the offensive player does not know where the defender is located. The traditional drop power move sometimes means a dribble baseline followed by picking up the ball in a bad situation.

This is especially true for coaches who put an unskilled, taller player in the post. It makes sense that it puts this player close to the basket to rebound. When there was plenty of time to work the ball for a shot this worked. In reality the defense rarely guards the player and it clogs the open basket. It is much better to have this player

setting screens or stepping out to the short corner or high post to be a pressure release passer. Teaching them how to play is still the best option. It will pay off in the long run.



Double low post

Keeping two players in the low post with a short shot clock requires some very special skills:

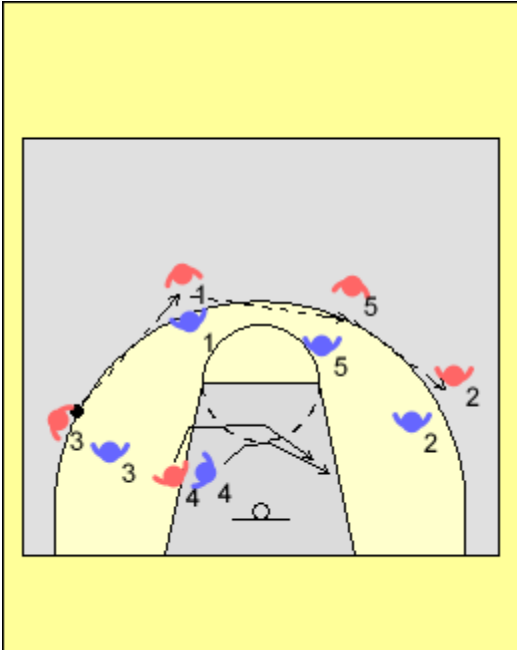
- ❑ The posts must be able to seal to create passing lanes in extremely small spaces
- ❑ The posts need to have superior physical advantage over the defense, but still have the finesse to score in a small space
- ❑ Must be able to handle double teams
- ❑ The passers must be able to pass to the post through small windows of opportunity often with extreme ball pressure applied

- ❑ All three perimeter players need to be able to shoot to stretch the defense and keep them honest

Time is required to make these happen. Time you may not have always have with a short shot clock.

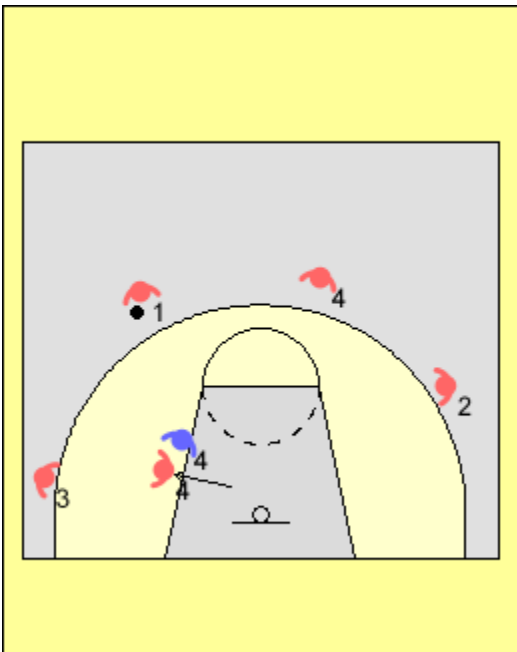
The problem is that if any of the perimeter players cannot shoot that player will not be guarded. This causes problems that require time to solve:

- ❑ The ball will be difficult to enter to the post since they can sag off the non-shooter
- ❑ The post can be doubled and the pass out will be difficult
- ❑ Penetration to beat the ball pressure on the passer is often crowded.
- ❑ Do not create long recovery. The defense can easily rotate, and the distances are usually very short.



Post following the ball

Many post players want to constantly follow the flight of the ball as it moves around the perimeter. This is fine if the player has an advantage and all of the perimeter players can shoot the ball. If the post has no advantage all this action does is put two people at the rim at all times. There is no open basket to attack by cutters and drivers. Post players must be taught to attack the open basket when he /she has an advantage and the perimeter players can deliver the ball. One good cut per possession is a rule used by many coaches.



Exit cuts

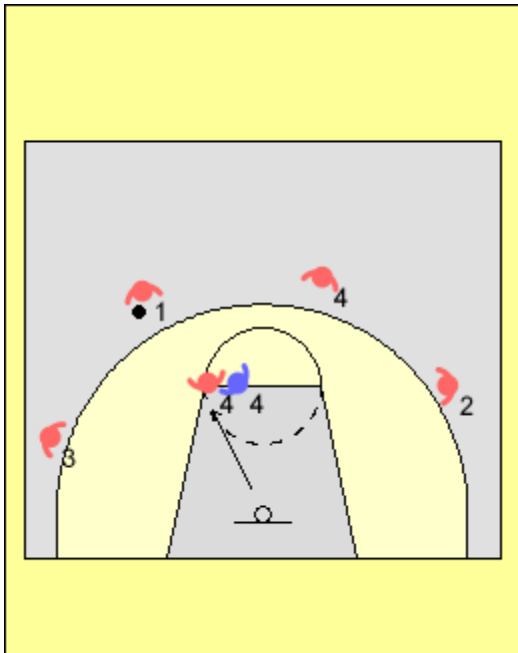
After the player has sealed in the key for 2 seconds he/she must now **exit** the key.

Where does he or she go? The first choice is often to exit to the ball side post. There are some advantages to this action:

- ❑ It creates a passing triangle with the guard and wing if the post has an advantage
- ❑ It sets up some reverse screening action (e.g. flex, back screen) on a ball reversal
- ❑ There is the option of attacking the rim with the alley oop pass or lob as the post defender is not in a help position

The disadvantage is that it:

- ❑ It clogs the basket for penetration by the guard or wing
- ❑ If there is no advantage the post's defender can guard the rim to take away any cutting, passing or driving action to the rim

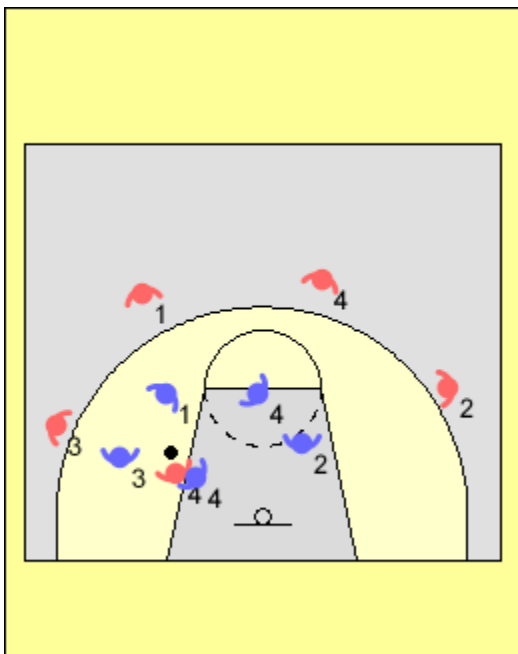


High post

This creates an open basket and makes the post player a better passing target. This is especially helpful against teams that want to deny wing entries. It allows for back door cuts and post to wing entries.

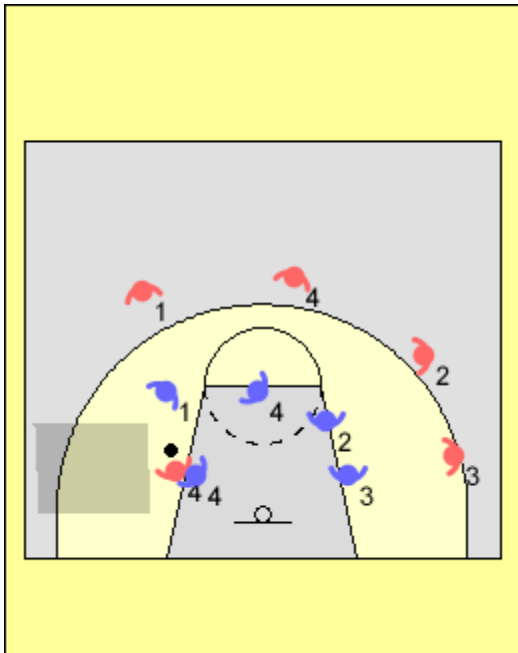
Perimeter exit cut

Many teams that do not play with permanent posts have the post exit to a perimeter position. They may also move into screening action.



When the post has the ball

If no one moves, as in the diagram, it is extremely difficult for the post player to make a positive action. The spaces are very tight. It is also impossible to have everyone in your vision without turning your head. This leads to double teaming.



Keep the ball side wing free

By keeping the ball side wing area open the post can see all players without turning his/her head. Many teams now allow the post to use the crab dribble to attack the basket. This area is cleared by having cutters or screeners. You need to create movement in your offense to break down or confuse the help defense.