

Inbounding vs Man-Man Pressure

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This article is written from notes taken during an on-court session with Italian master coach, Mario Blasone at the last A.B.C.A. annual coaches convention in Melbourne.

The initial set recommended by Coach Blasone, whether playing against man-man pressure or a zone press is as shown in Diagram 1.

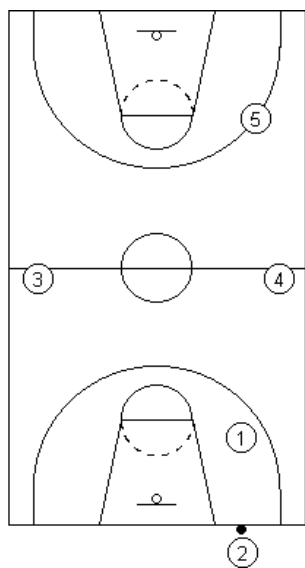


Diagram 1.

Getting the ball in is left to the guards who should be best equipped to do this. The forwards are positioned wide at mid-court and the centre is down court at the free-throw line extended on the same as the ball.

It is now up to the guard who is going to receive the ball to walk slowly to a position where he is level with his teammate who is inbounding the ball. He must now react according to how his defender is playing him.

If playing him tight the defender will be in one of three positions.

1. If the defender is playing him on the left or right side (see diagrams 2 and 3), the receiving guard should take a small step at the defender to freeze him, use an armbar to hold him off if necessary, indicate a target hand and move opposite to the defender. A pass to this side should be easy.

2. If the defender is fronting the receiving guard, he should signal for a lob pass over the top of the defender (see diagram 4). Again this should be an easy pass.

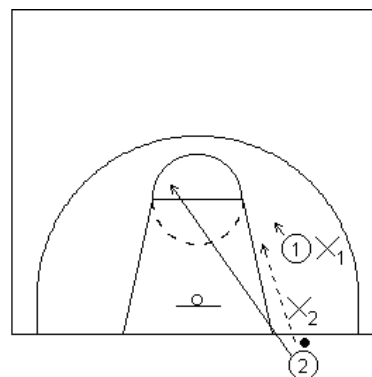


Diagram 2.

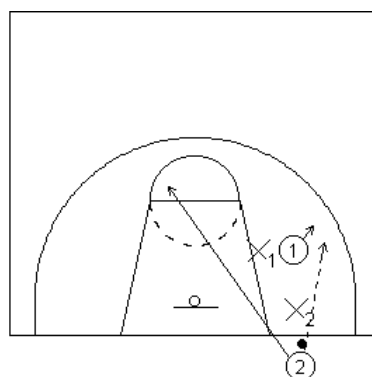


Diagram 3.

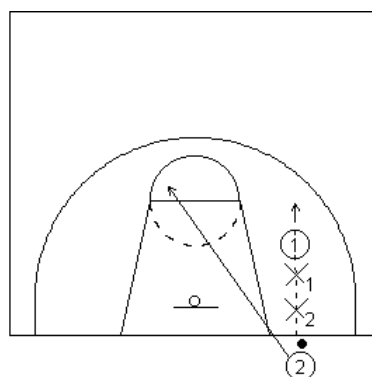


Diagram 4

If the defender X2 decides to leave the inbound passer and double-team the receiving guard, he should move to the closest corner of the court dragging the defenders with him. This will free up the court for a move for one of the forwards to sprint into space to receive the inbound pass (see diagram 5).

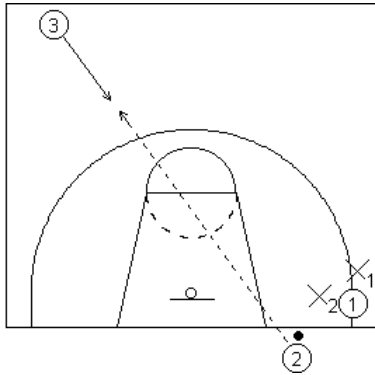


Diagram 5

If forward 3 is denied by his defender, he should screen up for the other forward who should flash to the ball (see diagram 6).

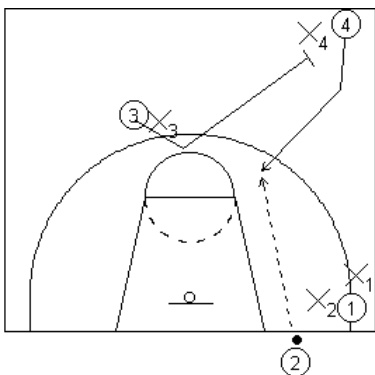


Diagram 6

Coach Blasone insists his players position themselves at all times so that they can see their four team-mates. One example of this is stressing to the forwards coming to the ball that they land in the "knife position". That is land side-on with your back to the closest sideline. That way, you can see all of the court and your four teammates.

A drill to prepare your players for bringing the ball up the court under defensive pressure was also suggested by Coach Blasone. The initial setup for the drill is shown in Diagram 7.

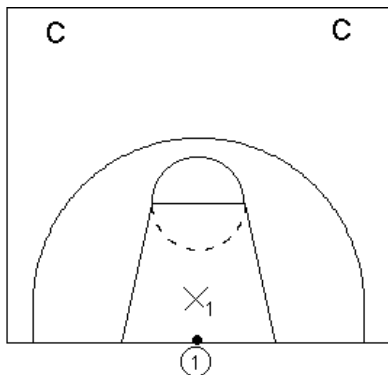


Diagram 7

Two coaches are positioned on the mid-court line while an offensive player has to dribble the ball up the court versus tight defensive pressure. At any time, either one of the coaches can "show ten fingers" indicating he wants the ball and the offensive player must make the pass. This obviously forces the offensive player to keep his head up to see the coach's signal.

The drill can be made more difficult by adding an additional defender.

Coach Blasone's "show ten fingers" rule is another example of his simple, yet effective teaching style. It is something I use myself with my players and something that should be introduced at the earliest possible age. It encourages players to look for their teammates and also encourages receivers to have their hands up ready to catch the pass.

Clinics that include Coach Blasone as a presenter are very worthwhile and entertaining, I recommend them to all of you. I hope we will see him back in Australia in the near future.