

## Teaching Out Of Bounds Plays to Young Players

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Many coaches of young players (8 to 10 years old) shy away from teaching their teams some “set” out of bounds (OOB) plays. Once your players have learnt the basic fundamentals (i.e. they can dribble, pass and shoot), I think there are many benefits to teaching some simple (I stress they need to be simple) OOB plays.

One of the biggest problems with younger players is their natural tendency to all follow the ball. This is true in all sports, not just basketball. This is most obvious when you have one player out of bounds with the ball and four others standing just inside the court, next to her, yelling for the ball.

Teaching some simple OOB plays can help alleviate this problem straight away.

The first thing to teach young players is when they have to move. It is quite amusing to watch young players cutting and weaving to avoid their defender when the referee hasn't yet handed the ball to the inbound passer! Perhaps the most common way to indicate the start of the play is to have the inbound passer slap the ball. This is the method I use. It also makes sure the players on the court are watching the ball.

The next fundamental I think it important for the players to have in this situation is the simple v-cut step. Teach them to take one or two slow steps in a direction away from the ball (or away from where they want to go) and then plant the foot, push off and explode quickly towards the ball (or where they want to go). Stepping into the defender will put her off balance and give you the moment you need to get open.

The first OOB play (if you can call it that) I taught my current team was used when we had the ball on the sideline. I simply got the four players to group together on the split line (the imaginary line from basket to basket). At the ball slap they all v-cut. Two should run towards the ball and the other two move into other open space, but I don't worry too much about who goes where. The key thing here is that there is a lot of

open space between the inbound passer and the players for them to run into.

The other advantage is they are now “moving to the ball” rather than standing and waiting for it. This is a big problem for young players. If you get your players to move to the ball as they receive passes they will be much more successful.

The other two OOB plays my U10 Girls use are used on our offensive baseline. Both use the same alignment with players lining up just outside the key. Which of the plays they use depends upon how the defense line up on them. If the defense line up inside the key, then the play shown in Diagram 1 is used. The first player in line runs to the corner shouting loudly for the pass. She is a decoy but may receive the pass if our number one option is not available. The second and third players set a strong screen for the last player in line who just pops out behind them for the pass and a shot over the screen.

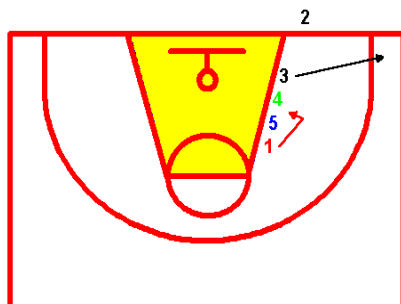


Diagram 1.

If the defense do not line up inside the key then the option shown in Diagram 2 is used. The inbound passer chooses the best option for the pass. It is surprising how often the ball gets to the center (5) in this play.

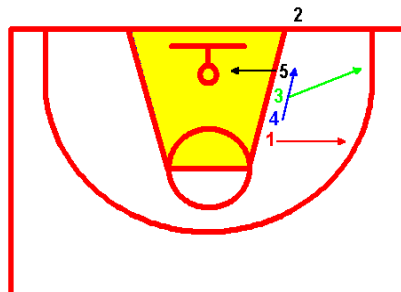


Diagram 2.

Although you might think that working through these simple plays may confuse the kids, I think that it actually helps them because they are given a precise position to stand and action to take. Often it is just not knowing what to do that causes them to move around aimlessly – or even worse to not move at all. Simple plays like these can give them some structure and direction.

It is particularly pleasing when the players begin to improvise off the OOB plays. I have found that starting off in a set pattern has actually helped them in “reading” the defense and acting accordingly.

Having some set plays also helps you as the coach spot the potential “court captains” or natural leaders in the team. They will be the ones that are yelling “line up” and directing the other players into position.

Give your plays some simple names to aid in remembering them and so you and the players can call them during games. It will also help to hand out diagrams and instructions in written form to your players. Then encourage the parents of the players to read through them with their children.

You'll find when teaching and practicing your OOB plays that it is an ideal time to stress and demonstrate many of the basic fundamentals of the game.

You may even find that they score you a few points and win a few games – and that can't be a bad thing!