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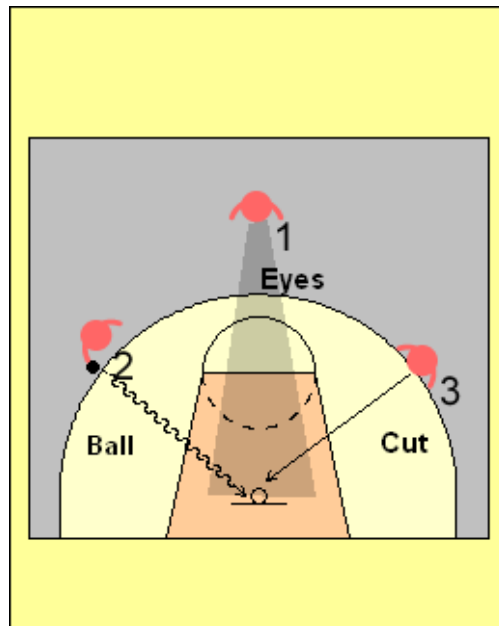
Food for thought: Attacking the rim

Watching teams play with the short shot clock has produced the following observation.

Teams often get lulled into playing on the perimeter and do not attack the rim. They play punch and pass or pick and pop and settle for outside shots.

You can attack the rim in three ways;

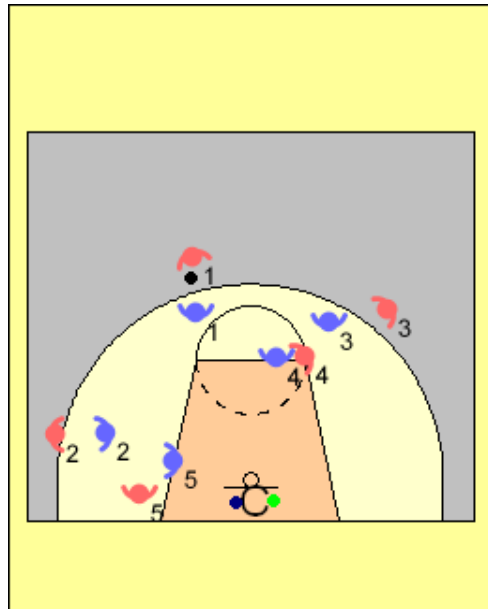
- with your eyes
- with the ball (dribble, drive, pass)
- with a body or a cut



With your eyes

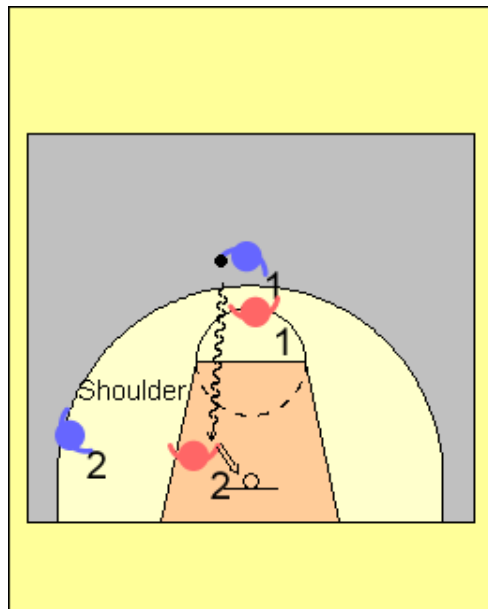
It is amazing the number of players who never look at the basket. The great players freeze the defense by looking at area under the rim. This allows them to see all the players on the floor. The help defense cannot cheat.

One drill that I have used with younger players is to stand under the basket and hold up makers or pinnies of different colors. The players must call out the color every time they receive the ball.



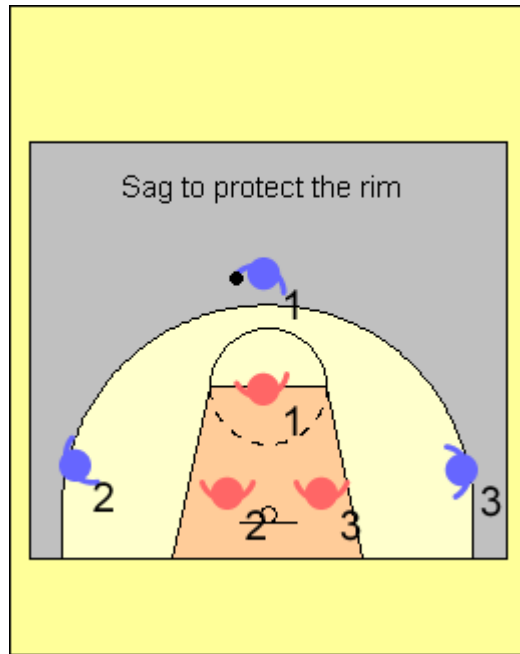
3) With the ball

Many players when penetrating are only thinking about passing. The penetration is not to score but on an angle away from the basket. They pass the ball at the first sign of help. Players need to read the defense. If a chest appears in the line to the basket, pass or change direction. If a shoulder or hand appears keep going. This is how fouls get created. Many players will only drive in one direction.



Shooting

You can attack the basket by shooting the perimeter shot, but many teams settle for too many jump shots. You do not create fouls and if you shoot quickly without moving the defense you do not create rebounds. Having said that you do need to hit outside shots to stretch the defense so they will not continue to sag and guard the basket in close.



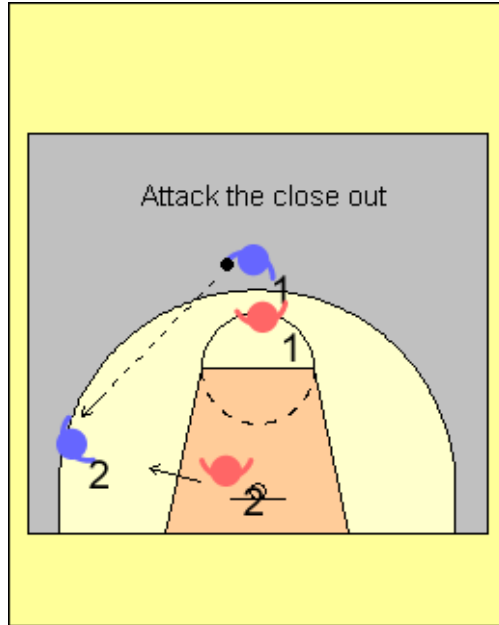
With the cut

This is an area that many players do not understand. I contend because most players have been taught to run patterns on offense and not learn concepts. I remember asking Don McRae a former National team coach and long time CIS coach when should players break off a pattern of the offense and look to go 1 on 1. His answer was:

- For a perimeter player when you see a bad close out
- For an interior player when you have a great seal.

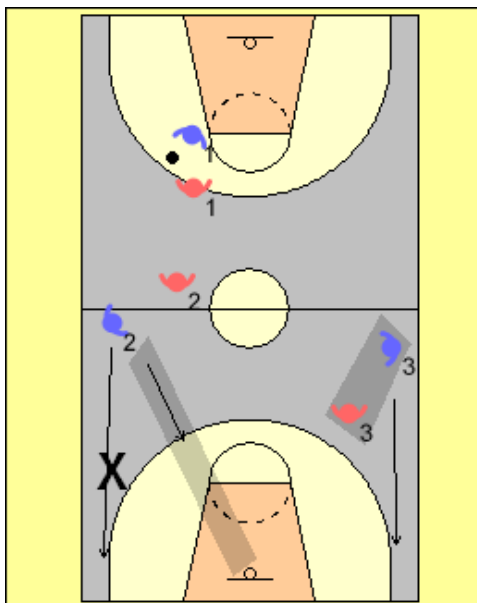
I now believe that another time occurs when you break off patterns.

- The player without the ball needs to attack the basket when he /she see an open rim. Be a cutter first!!!!

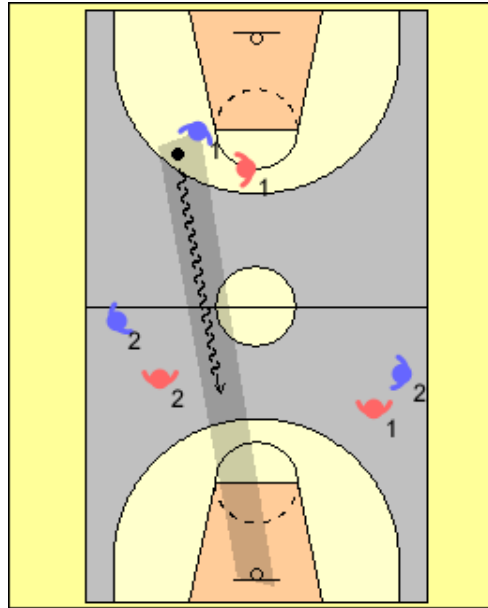


Attack the basket in transition

In this situation O2 sees an open basket. Instead of continuing to run wide he/she attacks the basket with a cut. On the other side O3 sees a defender between him/her and the basket. O3 continues to run wide to prevent X3 the opportunity to guard two people at once. If O2 does not receive the ball he/she must then spread the floor. He/she could cross with O3 or move back out to balance the floor on the same side.

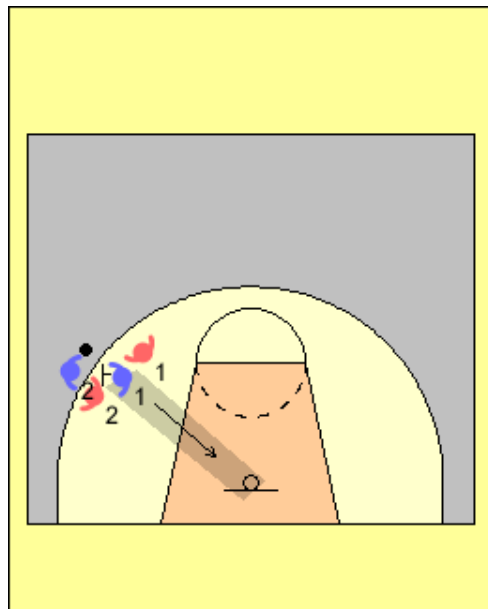


In this case it is O1, the ball handler, sees an open rim. Attack the basket! There is no sense in passing to either O2 or O3 who are guarded. When either X2 or X3 moves in to the drive line then the wing push will be an option.



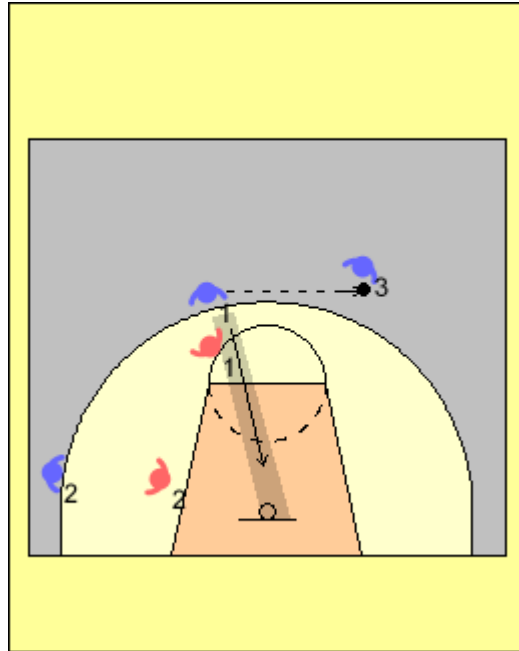
Pick

When O1 sets the wing pick for O2 he/she looks to the rim and sees an open basket because X1 is playing for the hedge. Slip the pick and go to the rim.



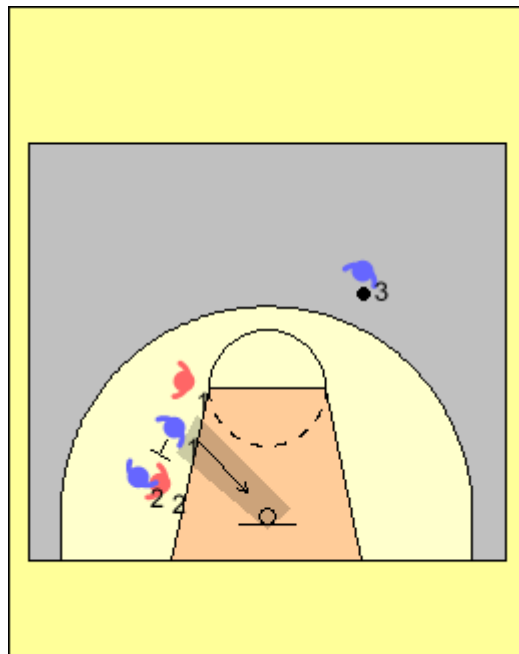
Pass

When passing the ball from O1 to O2, X1 does not jump to the ball. O1 sees an open rim and attacks the basket.



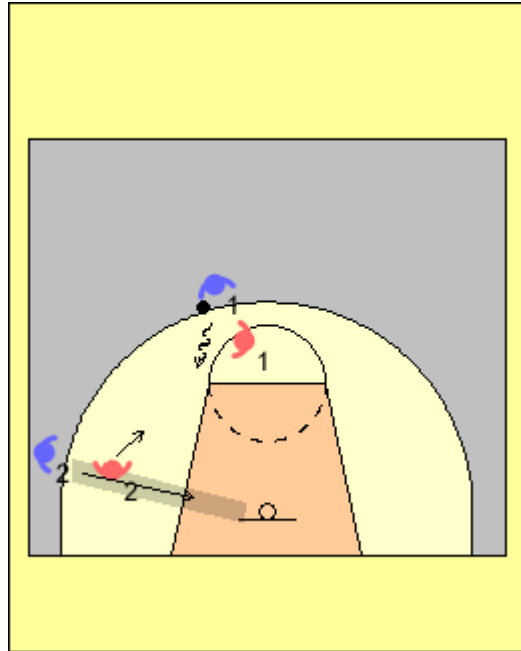
Screen

O1 sets the down screen for O2. When the screen is set he/she looks to the rim and sees the open basket because X1 is switching. Slip the screen and go to the basket.



Back cut

O2 sees X2 moving to high and leaves the rim open. Cut to the basket.



Things that prevent teams from attacking the rim

- Eyes down - do not see the rim or see the person who is open
- Poor skills - cannot handle the ball well enough to drive with either hand nor strong enough to make the pass
- Poor decisions or do not understand what to read - thinking about running a play instead of playing
- Fatigue - when tired players will not work hard enough to take advantage of the defense. Rather stand then cut.
- Players not sprinting or exploding on the basket make soft cuts – this is sometimes fatigue or not understanding how to use their body.
- Post players who cannot score clogging the line to the basket. This is often the design of the offense.
- Weak side offensive players not playing high and wide enough to prevent help from clogging the basket
- Lack of weak side action (movement) that makes the help side defenders move or be distracted
- Ball watching by the offensive players – when you don't have the ball read the defense. The ball will find you if you are open.