



Flow
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The concept of “flow” is very important in the FIBA game or in situation where a short shot clock, 24 seconds, is in use. The definition used here for flow is continuous, seamless action without noticeable disruption. Teams that “flow” usually gets good shot attempts and do not appear to be rushed by the clock. Defensive teams that can disrupt flow force the offense into rushed shots and poor decisions.

Flow on offense:

- Seamless flow between gaining possession and movement into the front court to attack the opponent’s basket.
- Each element of the offence connects without noticeable disruptions. Transition into ½ court offense into end of clock play.
- Each element can be initiated and executed by multiple players. It does not require a specialist, like the point guard, to *always* initiate the play.
- The ball is not stopped or held *without purpose* for a period of time during which the defense is allowed to recover or rebuild.

Flow on defense:

- Smooth transition from offense to defense
- Have the ability to disrupt the flow of the offense by:
 - Causing confusion or hesitation in the attack. The offense is confused as to whether the defense is man or zone. Also by talking the offense out of a set pattern.
 - Delaying the attack .Often this can be done by denying the point guard the ball or with selective traps and stunts.
 - Create poor shot selection by keeping the ball out of prime shot location or denying the ball to prime scorers. If teams run ‘robotic’ offensive patterns the defense can anticipate the offensives moves.

Allison McNeill - Two disruptions of flow means a bad possession.

As coaches we sometimes over specialize the game and practiced each part in separate compartments i.e. ½ court defense, ½ court offense, fast break, press break, transition defense etc. The majority of time is often spent on ½ court man to man offense started from very static positions. Yet in a possession you may only be in this phase for 10 -16 seconds of a 24 second shot clock. Transition is often the first 7 seconds and the final 7 seconds are the end of clock. The seam between these segments are the areas in which our players often struggle or waste time.

We need to practice more continuous flow or create disruptions and allow the players to rebuild the flow. When no shot clock was present time was not a concern. It did not matter how much time was taken to get into a play. In today’s game it is these small seemingly insignificant amounts of time that can make the difference between a good or wasted possession.

Players need to learn how to quickly get into each element of the game with haste. In training it is important that we allow players to “flow” into situation rather than start in the ideal situation. They need to be able to read and react quickly. Communication is crucial to flow. If set plays are called, the call must be “echoed” by all members and players sprint to their assigned spots. The team cannot allow one player to “bluff” their way

through the play. These players don't really know what is going on and wait for others to tell them what to do all of the time. Some players have made it to very high levels of play without ever learning the play. When challenged as to the play they will deflect the answer by saying: "I read the defense cheating so I cut to the post." When players are unsure they will not execute with a sense of urgency. The screen that is supposed to be set will be late and therefore no shot opportunity will appear. If running a motion or more conceptual offense the players must communicate the cuts and screens. Also the team must determine where the advantage lies; is it in the post, or wing isolation.

Other problems that may arise are:

- Players who lose confidence and become hesitant or internal. Their decisions making will be suspect.
- Players will also lose their focus and dwell on past mistakes.
- Player who becomes critical of a teammate play and starts to 'bark' at him/her. This takes energy from the team.

The team must find ways to get the players back to the present and stop playing in the past. A timeout or sub cannot be the solution all of the time. It has been my experience that these sorts of issues have a much bigger impact on flow than the more technical aspects of the game.

Gain of possession

Offensive flow starts with gaining possession of the ball. It is my contention that we do not incorporate enough variety into our training in this area. Players often are hesitant once the possession is obtained. Also it is a great way to add some fun to drills. Possession can be gained by:

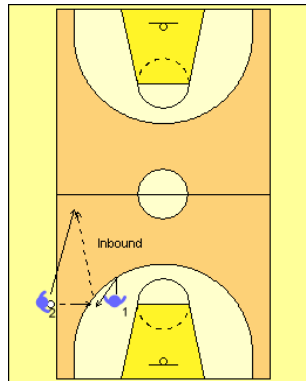
- Steal – turnover
- Save – this is a steal but usually involves diving on the floor or jumping out of bounds to save the ball.
- Rebound – offense and defense
- Violation or foul – inbound the ball where the passer cannot move.
- Made basket – inbound the ball where the passer can move.
- Jump ball - start of the game

1. Inbounding

Players need to work on starting from a various inbound positions and flowing into the offense

- Front court – sideline
- front court – baseline
- half court - can go either way (last 2 minutes of the game)
- Half court - front court only - back over
- Back court - sideline
- Backcourt – baseline
- Backcourt - baseline - can run the end line after a score

Below is an example of a two player drill where the ball is started by inbounding the ball from the back court. We will use this drill as an example of how flow can be taught.

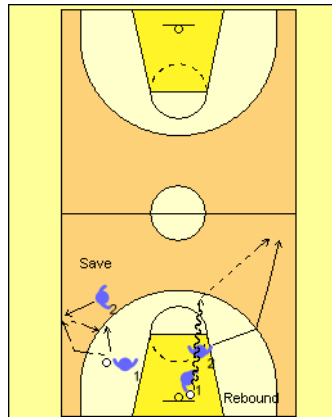


2. Save

Two examples:

- dive on the floor for a loose ball - tip it or pass to a teammate
- jump to throw a ball heading out of bounds back to a teammate

The diagram below shows #1 throwing a soft bounce pass out of bounds. #2 Sprints to save the ball from going out of bounds. He/she calls his/her teammates name as the ball is passed back inbounds. The two players now move down the floor into a more traditional 2-0 drill.



3. Rebounding

- Offensive rebound - do you reset or attack to score. Did the ball hit the rim and the shot clock was reset or not rim, nor reset?
- Defensive rebound with a break out dribble
- Defensive rebound with and outlet pass

In the above diagram the two player drill is started with a rebound and a break out dribble.

4. Steal

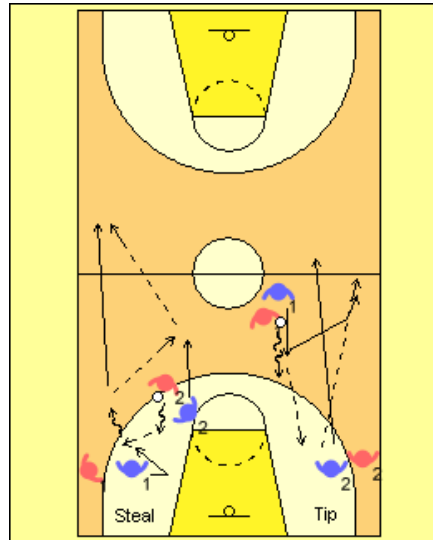
The below diagram illustrates two different ways in which drills can be started with steals:

- In the first situation the player helps on the top penetration and recovers to steal the soft pass the player in the corner
- In the second situation the player runs behind and "buzzes" the ball, tipping it forward to a teammate.

You could also set up situation such as:

- defensive player rotates on help defense to intercept a pass

- a defensive player helps down on a posted player or on the lob pass



Advancing the Ball

After possession is gained how quickly and efficiently the players flow into the offense is key. It is important to teach the players to sprint the floor to get ahead of the ball. All players should be able to initiate the advancement of the ball with the dribble and the pass. Below are various ways that need to be trained in advancing the ball.

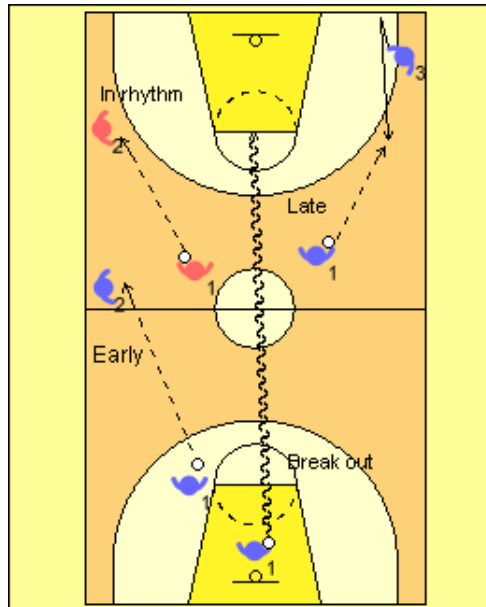
Outlet - upon gaining possession the ball is passed to a teammate. It is preferred that this pass is made to a player who has an advantage in advancing the ball.

Break out - upon gaining possession the ball is immediately dribbled, preferable up the middle of the floor. An outlet pass can occur after the dribble.

Early push - the ball is passed ahead to player down the floor before reaching an attack position (where the player with the ball is a threat to score) at the opponents end.

Attack - the ball is passed to the player in rhythm where upon the catch the player is threat to score.

Late - the player catching the ball has to have made some secondary movement before catching the ball. This could be a cut or using a screen.



Attacking or running offense

After the ball has been advanced the players must flow into their offense. This may be a quick attack if an advantage presents itself or it might be the initiation of the team's offensive strategy. This can be motion based or sets. Either can be effective as long as the players "flow" into it.

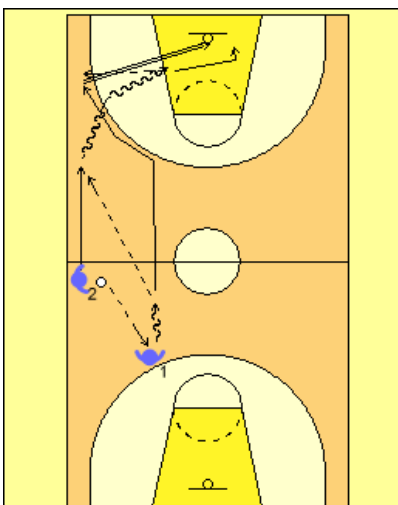
This is where traditionally we have started the players in the "perfect" positions. What is important is can the players:

- "Flow" into these positions with correct rhythm (timing and spacing).
- Quickly build the concept or set when a disruption has occurred
- Can it be started by any player or does it have to get into the hands of the specialist i.e. the point guard or a wing entry to start the offense.

What follows is a description of a two player flow drill. Use the concepts that apply to your offensive attack.

Early push

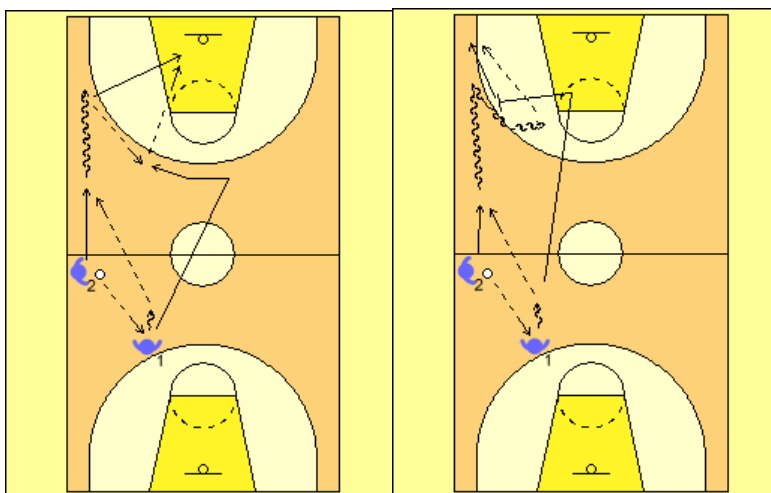
#2 passes back to #1 and runs the outside lane. #1 takes a dribble and makes the wing push to #2. #2 attacks the basket. #1 trails and "I" cuts behind on the penetration. #2 passes back to #1 who shoots the ball. #2 works for the weak side rebound.



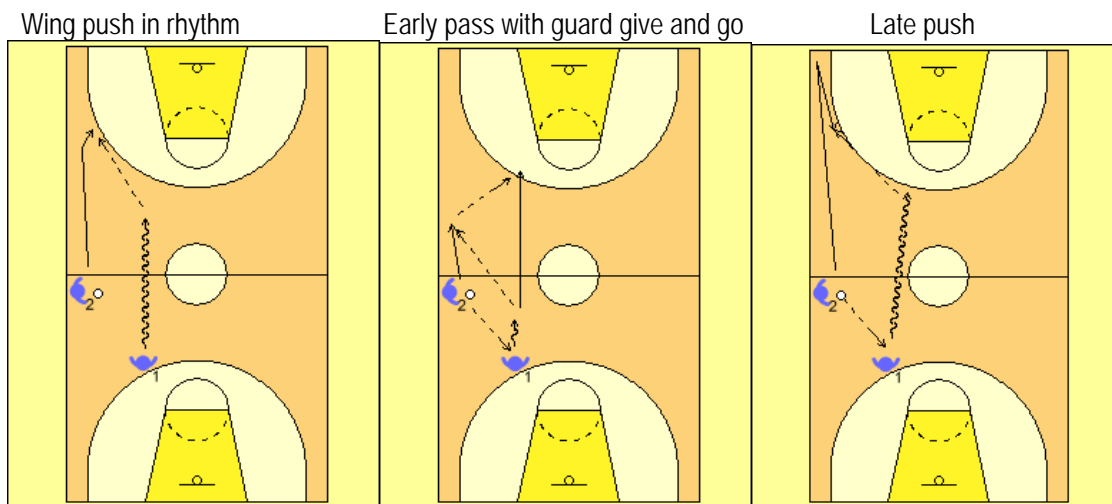
Note: This is starting from a static position. Once the players gain confidence **load** the drill with more creative starts. Start these drills with various gain possession situation

- a) rebound
- b) steal
- c) save
- d) made basket
- e) inbound

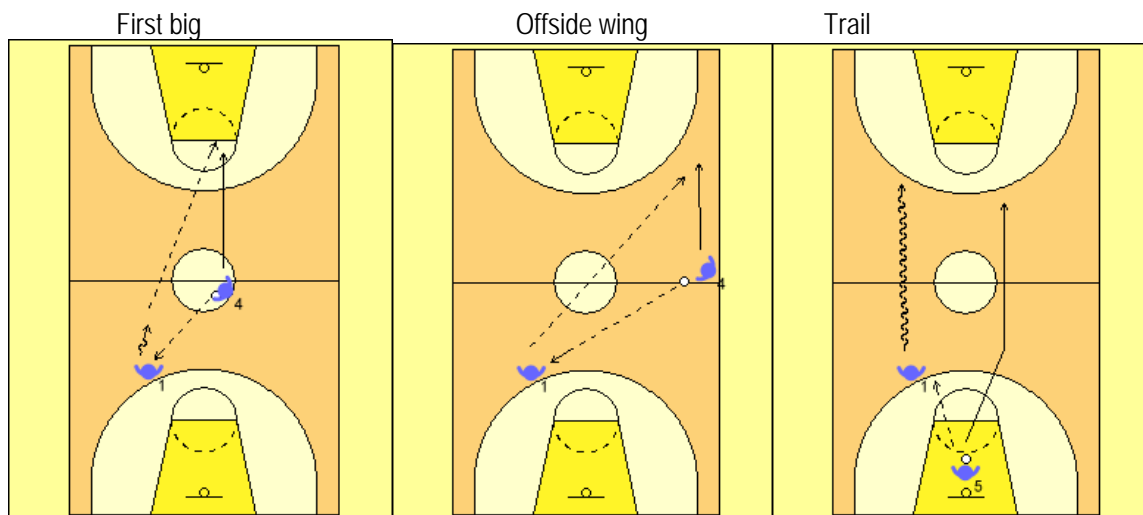
In this example the early push is made again with #2 advancing the ball to the attack area. The ball is passed back to #1 and a quick give and go is completed.



In this example above to the right the ball is pushed early and the players flow into a side ball screen.



The two player drill can also be played out of any positions:



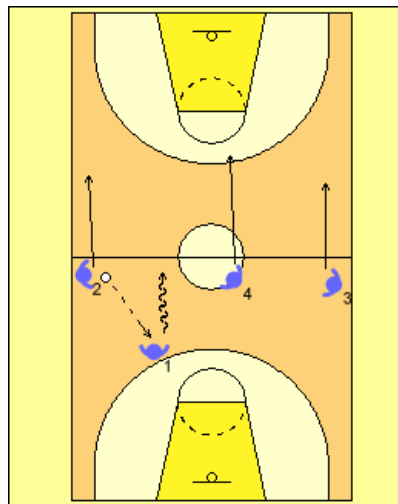
Loading drills:

1. On air - no defense, work on rhythm - timing and spacing
2. Scanning – receiver shows '10" fingers, read when to pass, scan the rim (a coach can stand under the rim showing different color pinnies to ensure the players look at the rim each time they receive the ball).
3. Add a creative start - gain of possession
4. Add a guided defender - work on decision making. This essential becomes 2 on 1 in small spaces.
5. Vs. even number of defenders - with guided defender. The coach should instruct the defense how to play:
 - Sag early - allow an early push to the wing
 - Sag into the key area – allows for a pass in rhythm
 - Deny hard with a sagging ball defender – look for late pass to wing
 - Wing denied with tough ball defense – attack the ball defender.
6. Even strength - play to strength. Here we want the offense to recognize where they advantage is for their team. Who is guarding me, who is guarding my teammate.
7. Transition back - flow from offense/defense.

8. Defensive assignment (pressure) – on made basket the new defense must quickly get into some sort of pressure defense.
9. Give the offense an advantage – in this situation new offensive players have a slight advantage starting at the foul line extended. This forces the defense to recover greater distances in their transition defense.

4 player flow drill

Another drill that is very successful in teaching flow is to use four players (it can also be done with 3 or 5). It incorporates the same concepts as the two player drills. Start by gaining possession, advance the ball and flow into the offensive concept. In the example below #2 passes the ball back to #1. On the pass #4 runs to become the first big and #3 is the offside wing. The coach can determine what concept the players can run. Please note: all players should play all positions when in the developmental stages. Do not always have the ball in #1's hands when making the decision on how to flow into offense.



The drill is loaded the same as the two player drill:

- a) On air
- b) 10 fingers – the coach stands behind #1. The coach shows the number 1, 2 or 3 with his/her fingers. This indicates who will show "10 fingers" for the initial pass. The coach can also indicate if this should be early, in rhythm or late. If no fingers are shown #1 should keep his/her dribble and attack the basket.
- c) Guided defense – the defense matches up. The coach stands behind #1 and indicates which defender should sag into the key. The other defenders deny. This forces #1 to read the open player. If no sag occurs, attack the rim since the help defense is occupied. This could also be a signal for the players to run their set.
- d) Transition
- e) Full court pick up on the made basket

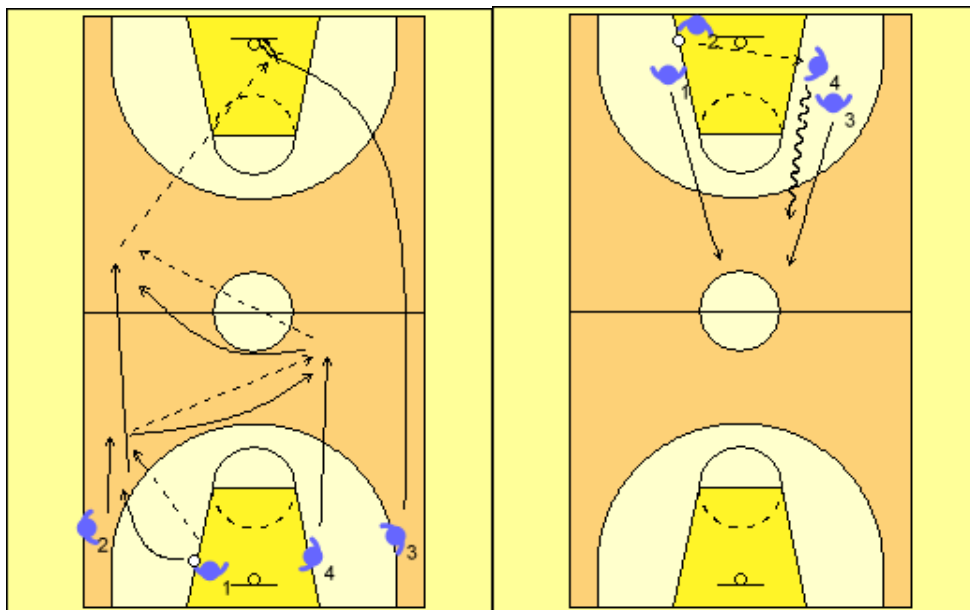
Three player weave plus a runner – 2 on 2 back

This is an excellent drill to teach offensive flow and defense pressure after a made basket. Three players run the weave while the fourth player runs to the rim as the runner. The pass must be made to the runner so he/she does not have to dribble or break stride. The player who passed the ball and the runner

instantly converts to defense and defend against the other two players. One will inbound and the other gets open. You can work on defending the inbound in one of four ways;

- Catcher – person guarding the inbounder is up on the ball. Look to trap once the ball goes in
- Shortstop – the person guarding the ball turns and guards the bellybutton of the player inbounds.
- Right field – the person guarding the ball plays behind the player inbounds and looks to shadow and slow down the ball handler
- Centre field – the person guarding the inbounder plays behind the player inbounds to take away the long pass. The other defender guards the belly button of the receiver. Once the ball is inbounded the offense must flow into offense with a concept designated by the coach i.e. ball screen, dribble hand off etc.

It is very important to debrief the players after the drill. In this drill while another four players go an assistant can ask a few key questions of the team that just went. It is highly recommended that you ask questions and not just tell them what they did right or wrong. Have the players describe what just happened. They need to develop a vocabulary what they are doing. This will never happen if all they have to do is agree with what you said. Players learn to “bluff” comprehension. They have many years of doing this in school under their belt.



5 player weave – 3 on 2 back

Another variation of the above drill is to use a 5 player weave down to score. The player who scored and the passer now are on offense back against three defenders. The defense can look to trap the ball as many times as possible. It is excellent for teaching the offense on how to handle random traps that can take you out of flow.

Continuous flow passing

This is a variation of a drill that Allison does with the Senior Women's team. It works on many of the passes that must be made on offense but must be done in rhythm. #1 starts with an outlet pass to #2, who misdirects long and circle cuts to get the ball. #2 now makes an early push to #3 cutting back from the corner to get the ball. #3 sweeps and attacks baseline. Reading help defense (a coach giving a read is a good option here) #3 stops and

passes back to #2 trailing behind on the penetration. #2 shoots the ball and #3 goes for the weak side board. #3 makes the outlet to #4 who passes the ball up to #5 who drives. Again, a pass is made back to #4 trailing the play. #5 goes for the weak side board. If possible have a coach or player with a football shield on the weak side that the rebounder must make contact with before rebounding the ball. You can change up the actions of the players. They can make early in rhythm or late entry passes. You can also work on any two player offensive concept.

