



Mike Mackay – Canada Basketball



The Shoulder Pass

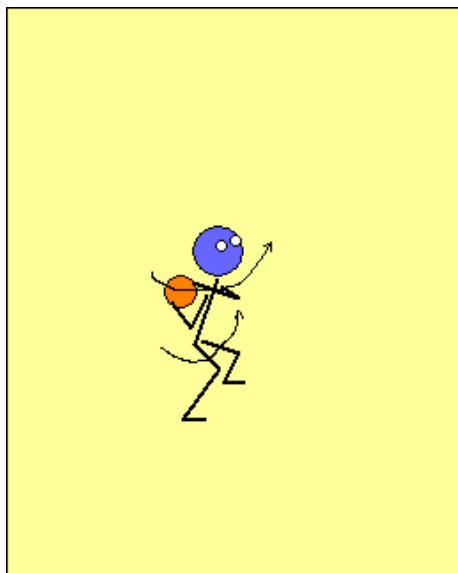
Players need to have a pass in their arsenal that allows them to pass the ball quickly from the "high" ready position. Very often the player is going to be closely guarded and the ball is being pressured. If the ball extends away from the body it will get deflected.

The concept of always pivoting to face your target is sometimes slow and allows superior defense to read the intent of the pass. Anyone who has ever watched a point guard dribble down the floor, jump stop at the top, pivot and try to make an entry pass to a wing or post knows the dilemma.

The shoulder pass is an excellent pass to quickly reverse, skip or outlet the ball. It can be thrown from the right or left shoulder. It is very effective when dribbling off a pick and throwing back against the grain quickly. The power comes from the twisting action of the core and the quick flick of the forearms, wrists, and fingers. You do not need to step to make this pass if the core is strong.

One of the problems we have found is that weaker players, often younger, are very slow in their passing because they have to move their entire body to generate power in their passes. The power comes by falling with their body in the direction of the pass. It becomes very easy for the defense to get in the passing lane to deflect or intercept the ball.

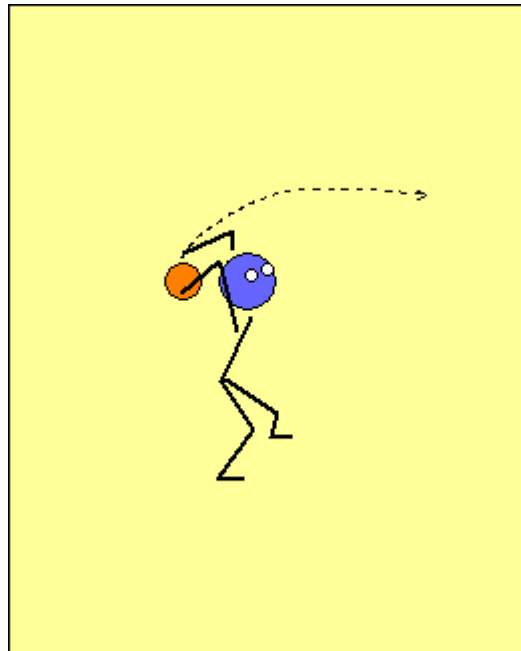
We promote the concept of "fast hands".



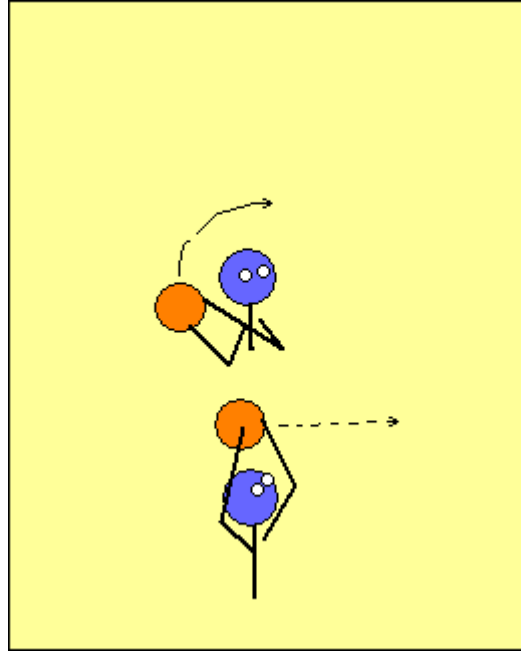
The over head pass

The problem with the overhead pass is in the way in which the passer generates the power. If the player is facing the receiver the only way to throw the ball quickly is to step and take the ball back behind the head. This usually produces a high arching throw or a 'soccer throw in" at the feet. There is no twisting action used to generate power, it is more of a sling shot effect.

You would never ask a player in throwing sport, like baseball, to generate power without some sort of twisting action.



The shoulder pass starts with the passer looking at the rim. The power is generated by twisting the upper torso and the hips in the direction of the pass. The ball crosses the hair line of the passer's head. The face is turned to the receiver. No pivot is required.



The shoulder pass finishes with an overhead pass at the end. By having the releases over the head the player can throw this pass from within a tight space. When players cross the ball in front of their face they often produce a side spin or throw a "slider".

