COACH MACS

FAST BREAK OFFENSE

PLUS SCORING ON JUNK DEFENSES

BY FORREST MCKINNIS
The Fast Break Offense

Plus

Scoring On Junk Defenses

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Today’s game is far more complex than one could have ever imagined as Naismith first dropped that round ball through a peach basket out on the farm. In the early days, the game of basketball was one of complete and total control without regard to the fluid nature the rules had called for.

Enter the idea of ‘Rim Value’. It is no longer enough to have a great half court offensive serious, but rather a program strategy should be well rounded and come complete with a great deal of ability to attack the opponents goal. The ability to attack the rim while using a set offensive attack is what I deem ‘Rim Value’.

One way to establish ‘Rim Value’ is through implementation of an early offense set or secondary breaking offensive. Basketball coaches should not rely on their players to back the ball out and set up plays but rather should rely on a smooth transition break to create points before the defense can get set.

In our program we apply pressure from the defensive side of the ball and don’t give up on the offensive end. In fact, in much regard the offensive pressure we apply using out breaking concepts places us in a far greater advantage over our opponent.

The Fast Break Offense is a series of early offensive attacks we use in three areas of the game; we’ll use our primary break on every change of possession. Any time we gain control of the ball we run our primary break, the secondary break in this book is used on dead ball to live ball situations (free throws, made baskets), and finally we’ll designate our master early offense when trying to beat the defense from getting set.
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FAST BREAK ADVANTAGES

1. Coaches can place specific players in certain positions to provide for their athletes the ability to make plays.

2. It has ‘Rim Value’

3. The break series can give you both an inside and outside presence.

4. Coaches preach spacing and proper balance. The break series provides for excellent balance among the team.

5. Develops and opens passing lanes.

6. Offside defensive positions are compromised and thus it provides for a great post up scoring option.

7. Bombs Away! Its emphasis on the 3-point line allows for great shooters to get open looks.
Player Responsibilities

This fast break system is great because it assigns certain routes to every player on the floor. No matter the situation that arises, these routes remain the same. The 2 position will always fill to the right, while the 3 will always fill to the left etc. In order for this break to be effective coaches must understand the strengths and weaknesses of their team. Here is the break down by position.

Point Guard (#1)

The point guard is always the ‘outlet’ man and should work in every possession of the ball to cut back to the outlet pass. This position should be taught to ‘push the ball down the floor” as quickly as possible and on the pass to the wings where at all possible.

Swing Guard (#2)

The swing guard fills to the right release position at all times. The release positions should use the sideline and harsh marks at their guiding marks. We ask our 2’s and 3’s to hit the free throw line extended and cut to the basket at a 45 degree angle. The swing guard should be your best slasher of the wing position. We like to refer to the actions required by the wing positions (2 & 3) as filling ‘high and wide’.
Player Responsibilities

Shooter (#3)

The shooter position is our 3 position and always fills to the left side of the floor. I should make note that the 2 and 3 roles can be reversed if you have a left handed point guard who tends to outlet to the left. Like the 2 position the 3 fills high and wide and makes a 45 degree cut to the basket from the free throw line. The 2 & 3 should always be ready from the quick outlet from the point guard or the trigger.

First Trailer (#4)

I took the first trailer and trigger names from the Phoenix Suns fast break. The first trailer should be your better of the post positions. The first trailer sprints down the center of the floor trailing the point guard. If the first trailer receives the outlet pass from the point guard or the trigger he should look down the floor for quick outlets to the release positions (2 & 3).

Trigger (#5)

The trigger player is important. They are responsible for always inbounding the ball on a made basket or out of dead ball situations. The trigger should inbound quickly. The trigger first looks to the deep release, then to the point guard and finally to the first trailer.
Player Responsibilities

Secondary Break Spot Up Positions

Remember any good offensive break will look to take advantage of applying pressure to the defense by quickly moving from the primary break responsibilities, into their secondary break spot up position and finally into a smooth flowing continuity offense.

Once the players how found their final positions in their primary break (diagram 1 below), they are now set into their secondary break positions or early offense position. Diagrams of the primary break are included in the primary break section of this book.

DIAGRAM 1
PRIMARY BREAK
PRIMARY BREAK FROM A MISSED BASKET

Diagram 2 shows the primary break responsibilities out of a 2-3 zone set (missed shot). It doesn’t matter what defense you are in the alignment and responsibilities remain the same. The #5 is the trigger in this case because he got the rebound. What if 3 rebounds? 3 triggers to one and then continues to fill his responsibility on the wing. All players must hold true to their responsibilities. 1 can should be taught to outlet up the floor by pass if possible or by speed dribble (as shown in diagram). Note the players are in secondary break position (diagram 1) and ready to make their next move.
PRIMARY BREAK AFTER A MADE BASKET

I truly believe if you are going to be a fast breaking team you have already made the commitment to being a pressure oriented basketball team. Pressure can be applied on the defensive end, but is deadly on the offensive end. Using the break after a made basket puts pressure on the defense to get back to stop the scoring opportunity. In diagram 3 below the primary break is run after a made basket. Notice the 5 is the designated trigger. The ball was denied to the point guard, so the trigger inbouned to the first trailer (#4) who then makes a pass on a cutting point guard down the middle of the floor.
SECONDARY BREAK
SECONDARY BREAK

The primary break is effective getting the ball down the floor, but hasn’t produced a score for the team. Enter the secondary break or action taken after the primary break doesn’t produce a score. The secondary break action is dictated by strong side. Remember the rule of triangles in the game of basketball. You can not effectively produce proper balance and spacing without the triangle formation. Look at diagram 4 and see if you can find the triangle being formed on the strong side of the floor.

In diagram 4 the point has dribbled the ball up the floor but was unable to advance it with the pass. Once the ball has advanced both wings positions should be in their secondary breaking position (diagram 1). They should then move out to the free throw line extended. The point should pick a side and the first trailer dives to strong side (side with the ball) low block. This maneuver is shown in diagram 4 with the guard choosing the left side as the strong side. Reverse the action if the guard were to go to the right instead of the left.

Diagram 4
SECONDARY BREAK CONT.......  

After the guard has determined the strong side of the floor we finish our secondary break with the following screening options.

The ball is reversed by passing to the trailing trigger man (5) who passes to the weak side wing (2).

The first trailer (4) always follows ball and moves to low block ball side.

After pass to the wing the shooter (3) sets a back screen for 5. Look for a lob here.

If there is no lob opportunity to 5 and no pass down low to 4. The ball is reversed again and a cross screen is in the low block and from the point position to the off side wing.

You are now in a common 1-2-2 set and can set your offensive continuity from this position. We’ll commonly move into our Monster Flex series or our Whistle Pick & Roll.
FAST BREAK FOR FEEDER PROGRAMS
FEEDER SYSTEM FAST BREAK

Don’t underestimate the important of your feeder systems. What is being taught within your youth programs should mirror the philosophy they should expect as they move up in levels. The fast break is not different. Here is an excellent ‘youth’ oriented break we use in our feeder system to teach the basics of our primary break. The rules in our primary break are the same at the varsity level as they are in the feeder level. The 2 &3 breaks out high and wide and fills the outside lane using the sideline as a guide. Once they reach the free throw line they make a good 45 degree cut to the basket. In the diagram below we use our trailers to set screens for our wings. This teaches each player the value of hustle. After screening the posts open up and now we are in the traditional 1-2-2 for a pick and roll set or the Monster Flex series.
EARLY OFFENSES
EARLY OFFENSE

Play 1

1. In the primary break after the ball has been passed to the 'shooter' position (3). 4 is not open and this play is called.
2. 3 passes back to the guard (1).

1. 5 the trigger man should be the second trailer and moves over to set a pick and roll action with the guard (1).
2. 2 then relocates to offside deep corner.
3. The 4 then sets up a back screen for 3 who becomes the shooter.
EARLY OFFENSE
Play 2

1. This early set begins with the trigger (5) setting a screen for 1 after 1 is unable to enter the ball into the primary break.

2. After screening for the guard, 2 moves up and sets a back screen for the trigger (5).

3. 3 should set up a screening action from the first trailer (4).

4. 1 should look first to the back screen and then to the down screen for 3.
SCORING ON JUNK DEFENSES
JUNK DEFENSES

For any coach, the ‘junk’ defense is employed for one of two reasons. First, your opponent is looking to catch you off guard and use the element of surprise to interfere with your offensive rhythm. Secondly, an opponent might feel the bulk of offensive production might come from one (maybe two) players and regards the rest of the team as non-threats. Four years ago we had a player in our league out of Central Oregon that was leading the scoring average by a mile—scoring 32 points per game—we elected to implement a box and 1 defense to throw off our opponents rhythm as well as kennel the explosion of offensive firepower this player possessed.

Junk defenses come in two very distinct combinations. The box and 1 (sometimes referred to as the diamond and 1) and the triangle and 2. Teams often attack the junk defense using their regular offensive sets to force open opportunities for their scoring threats. This type of philosophy is what I refer to as the traditionalists. Tradition says, if you run your offense with precision no one will be able to beat you. These are also the coaches who can be found saying, “defense wins ball games”. There is absolutely nothing wrong with this approach. Yet, there are those who are opportunists like myself who rely on certain zone busting principles such as:

- Attacking the Interior
- Ball Movement
- Spacing
- Faking a pass to make a pass

to counter the junk. Offensive maneuvers like back screens, high/low situations, and on-ball screens are the most effective means of scoring points on a junk defense. Finally, it is important to practice and implement specific offensive sets your team will use against a box and 1 or triangle and 2 alignment. I honestly feel the sets included in the following pages will keep any junk defense at bay.
1. Play 1 begins with a rogue screening action set from 2 (the boxer) on the opposite side low post. This action is really just to get the defense moving.

1. After setting the down screen for the opposite post player (4). 2 then runs off of a double screen action from the posts (5 & 4). You may also wish to set a double staggered here instead of a double stack screen.

2. The guard looks to pass the ball to 2 coming off the double screen. Remember the key is getting the ball to the boxed player for they are usually of enough talent to generate their own look at the basic.
1. If 2 (the boxer) doesn’t have an open look to score, they return the pass back to 1.

2. 4 & 5 set double screens again for 2.

3. The offside wing (3) then sets a single for 2. This is often referred to as the single/double action.

4. 1 should look to deliver the ball to 2 coming off of the screen. Teach 2 to read the defense and curl if there is a trail.
BEATING THE BOX & 1

Play 2

Sometimes the coaches philosophy in a box and 1 is to let the remaining four players take on the brunt of the scoring responsibility. Play 2 is designed specifically for this purpose.

1. 1 (boxer) passes to either wing.

2. The offside wing then will move up and set a back screen for 1.

1. Pass should then returned to the guard position. Remember the remaining defenders are in a zone, which should allow for an easy ball reversal.
BEATING THE BOX & 1

Play 2 Continued

1. On return pass back to the guard, 3 then takes the ball on the dribble.

2. 2 then moves off of a double/single screening action. The double set by 4 & 5 and the single set by 1 (the boxer).

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1. Pass then is made to 2 after screening series.

2. 1 (boxer) moves across the key to set a block to high post screen for 4.

3. The high post (5) dives to the low block after 4 flashes high.
**BEATING THE TRIANGLE & 2**

**Play 1**

1. In play 1, we are trying to run both (boxers 1 & 2) off of a double screen for a jump shot. Play begins with 1 passing to open 3.

2. 2 (boxer) then makes a hard cut and off double screen from 4 & 5.

3. 1 (boxer) after passing moves down to wing position.

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1. 3, if unable to pass the ball to 2 or upon receiving a return pass from 2, will dribble to opposite side.

2. 4 & 5 will move across the key.

3. 1 (boxer) will then cut back door and move around a double screen set by 4 & 5.
BEATING THE TRIANGLE & 2

Play 2

1. We use this play frequently when we see a triangle and 2. It is part of our set playbook and is something we will practice on occasion so we are versed in its attack.

2. Play begins when 1 (boxer) passing the ball from the wing to the unguarded 3.

3. 2 sets a back screen for high post (4).

1. 3 should look for the lob involved with the back screen on 4 because we know there will be no switch.

2. 5 flashes to high post.

3. 3 passes to 5, signaling 1 to go back door.
BEATING THE TRIANGLE & 2

Play 2

1. If 3 is unable to pass the ball to 5 for the back door cut. The pass moves to 1.
2. 5 then screens across for 2 (boxer) who curl cuts through the key.
3. 1 should try to pass the ball to 2 after screen has been set.
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