



Greg Francis - Defensive Rotations

CB's Coaching Education and Development

Another way to look at defensive rotations

Greg Francis, our NEDA boys coach and Junior National team coach has developed a different rotation for man-to-man defence than what most North American coaches use.

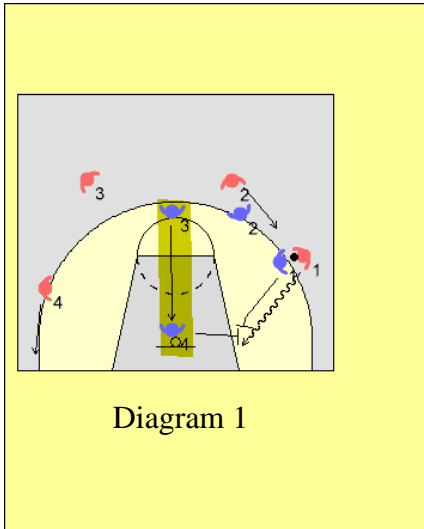


Diagram 1

He developed it because when playing teams from Argentina and Europe our method of force baseline and trapping the ball handler was not very effective. In diagram 1 the ball handler is forced to drive baseline where the low player in the defensive 'I' (the two defenders on the help side, Blue #3 and #4 form the "I") comes and traps the ball. The top player in the I drops to cover the basket and force a tough drift pass to red #4 in the corner. In North America, the ball handler usually picks up his /her dribble or turns back to the direction he or she just came.

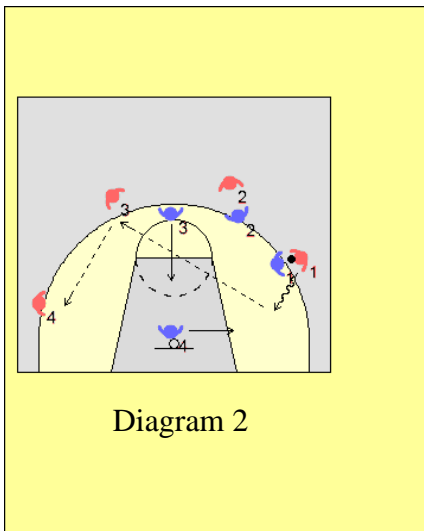
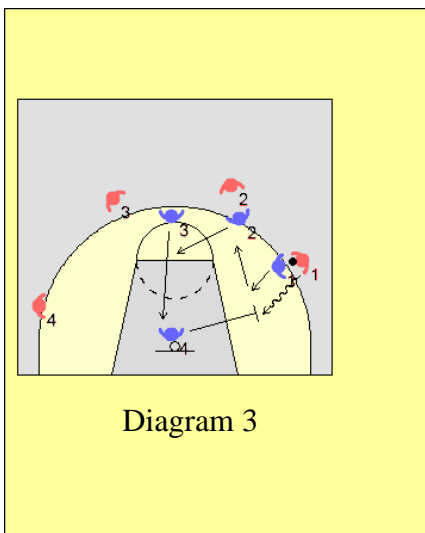


Diagram 2

Diagonal pass

International teams are very good at making the quick skip or diagonal pass off the dribble. This now puts your defence into a scramble mode, where you are constantly making long closeouts to players who can shoot or drive.

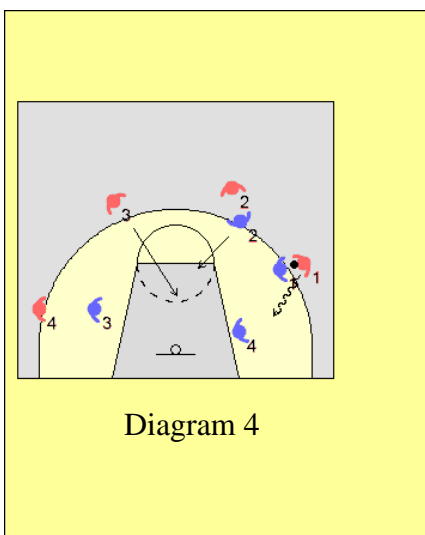
Ideally, you do not want to get into situations where you need to count on your defensive rotations. If every player could contain their check from penetration, you would have a very effective defence.



Attack the dribbler

Coach Francis wants to attack the dribbler. If blue #4 sees that help is required (remember if no help is needed don't rotate. If you can read the number of the chest of the dribbler you need to help) he will call "switch" as he attacks the ball handler in help. All of the other perimeter players (we will deal with the post player shortly) are now involved in the rotation. The top of the 'I' drops to the basket to make the drift pass more difficult. #2 blue rotates to the top of the 'I' looking for cutters or to be ready to close out on a pass on the diagonal, Blue #1 upon hearing the switch call peels off and looks for the next player in that direction.

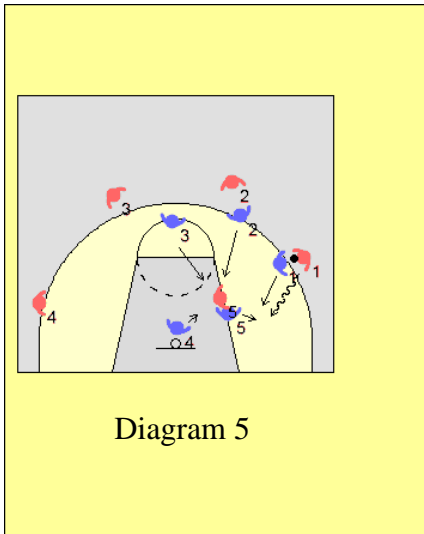
Note: Originally the ball is being denied back to the top by blue #2, We want to keep the ball on one side of the floor.



Drop to the basket

Greg has found that the top player in the 'I' often wants to go to the drift player immediately without checking the front of the basket, blue #3. This leaves an open dive by red #3 to an unprotected basket. It is next to impossible for blue #2 to rotate quickly enough to prevent a pass or have good rebounding position.

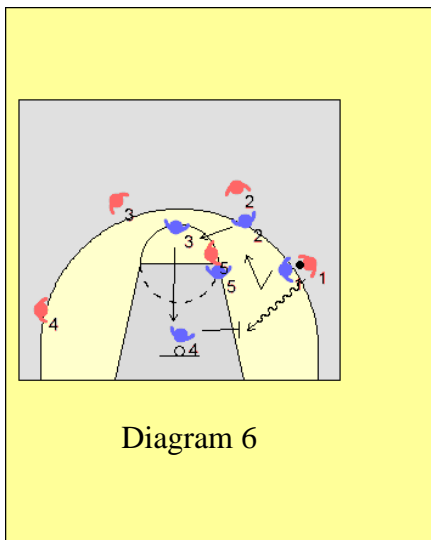
Mismatches do not affect you as much as you think when you play with a short shot clock. By the time teams become aware and then organize a strategy to take advantage of the mismatch the clock is running down.



Ball side post

When there is baseline penetration with a ball side post we want the post to show. The other players shrink the floor to make a pass to the post difficult. The players recover to their own checks.

Note: it cannot be stressed enough the importance of keeps the hands up. A number of deflections are created and passing lanes discouraged by this simple action.

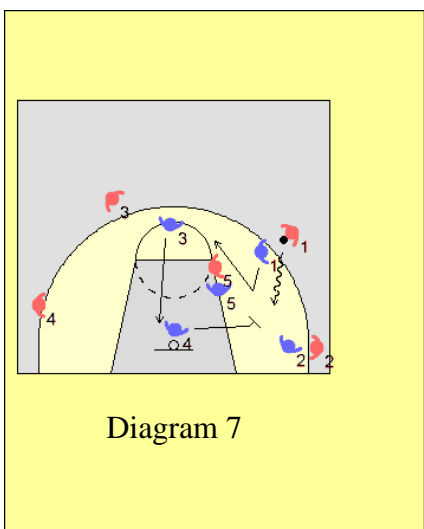


No post help

In all other situations, Coach Francis does not want the post to help. It is only the perimeter players who rotate.

If the post is guarding a non-shooter who spaces away from the basket the post defender can sag to clog the middle.

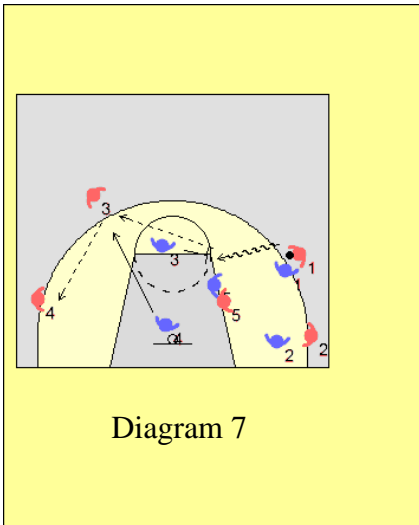
Greg has found that when the post gets involved in rotation you give up too many offensive rebounds to the offensive post player.



No help off the strong side

One of the hardest concepts for players drilled on tradition defensive shell drill to learn is, not help off the strong side corner. Too many teams put a good catch and release shooter in this position for this very reason. Greg wants the player defending the corner to be in an open stance with wide arms. This visually shrinks the driveline. If the drive occurs, do not step to the driver. This forces two movements; help and then recover. It is the change of direction that makes you slow. By starting in the open help position you just have to recover.

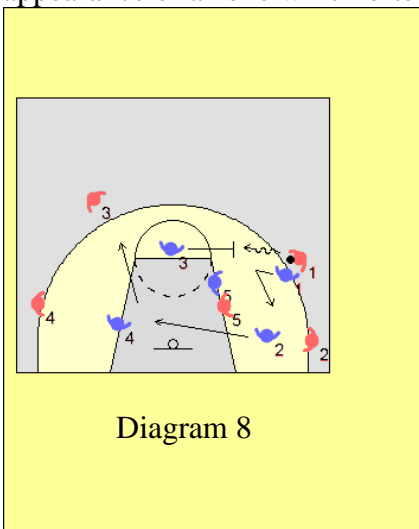
The help comes from the help side with same rotations as discussed above.



Middle penetration

Sometimes a team does attack the middle even if you work to prevent it. Diagram 7 shows blue #3 helping over. When you help off the help side in middle penetration, it is a very easy pass for most players if the offence maintains good spacing. It also creates a scramble situation for your defence to recovery to the quick pass pas by the offence. If teams freeze the ball on the catch, like many North American teams you do not have to worry about scrambling.

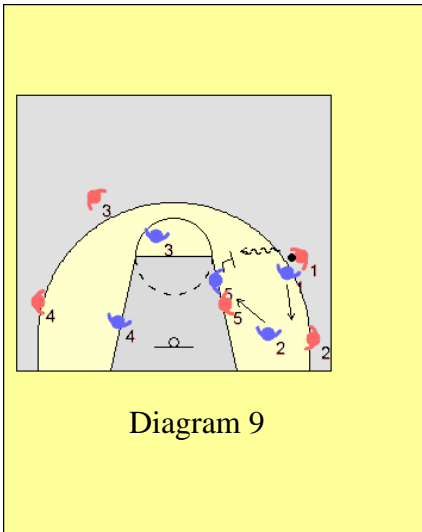
Coach Francis has found that you cannot always play the same defence against every team over the course of a weeklong international tournament. Sometimes you need a plan B. By forcing the ball to the elbow and discouraging the baseline drive you often take teams out of their rhythm, Many international teams play a 1-4 set across the high post. It makes it very difficult to get your traditional help there in time. It also gives the appearance of a zone which often makes the offence become more static.



Attack the dribbler

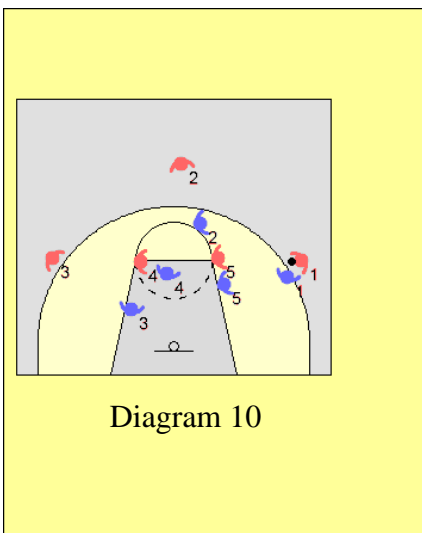
Blue #3 starts in an open help position. He does not deny the reversal pass. If the pass is made he just has to recover. The post is now playing on the high side because he has sagging help from blue #2 in the corner. Greg wants him to have a hand showing up the elbow. Again, this gives the appearance of a zone.

On the drive, blue #3 calls switch if help is required. Blue #4 covers the first pass while blue #2 is responsible for the second pass. Blue #1 drops off to cover the player in the corner.



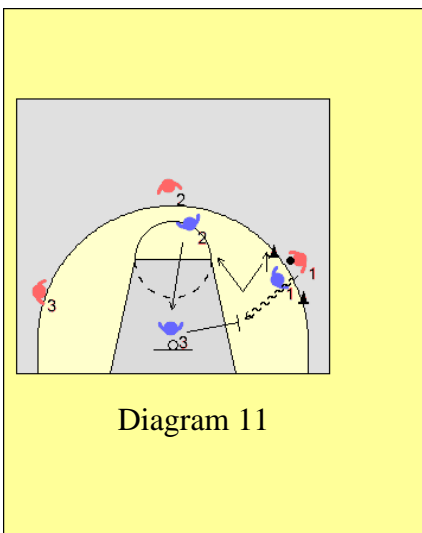
No help off the help side

Against teams that are very good at spacing shooters on the help side you can make the help come from the strong side. In this situation, the ball side post helps on the drive to the elbow. The corner player blue #2 rotates to take the post.



1-4 high

When a team plays a 1-4 high set we do not deny the reversal pass. Blue #2 sags to help on the high post. This forms a wall that discourages any penetration to that area.



Drill

This is a good drill for younger players when you are working on rotations. Red #1 has the ball on offence between two pylons. Blue #1 is guarding. The other players build the 'I'. Blue #1 initiates the drill by sliding over to touch one of the pylons. In Diagram 11 he has touched the top pylon. This gives red #1 the decision to drive baseline. The 'I' must now react accordingly. If the defence touches the bottom pylon the offence drives middle. It also gives the offensive player a lane in which to drive. They learn to KOB (keep on body). Load the drill by starting in different positions.