I was fortunate to spend some time with two of my favourite mentors yesterday, Ian MacMillan and Al Yarr. We were discussing setting picks and screens.
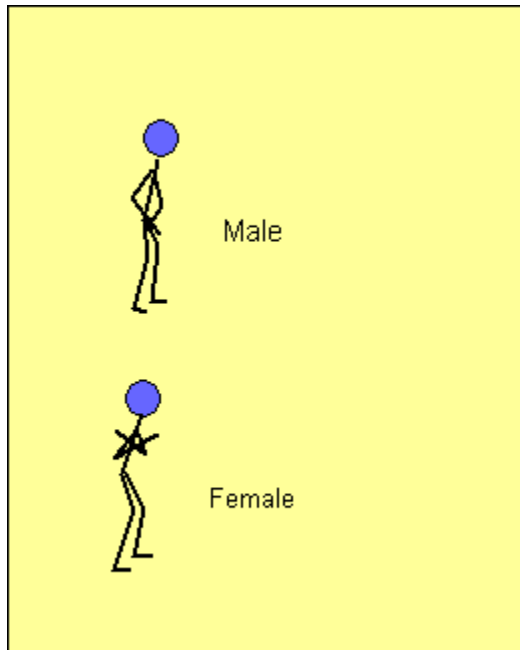

Male

Female

Setting safe and effective screens

For years we have said that males set screens with the arms folded across the groin and females fold the arms across the chest. This was always done with a little tongue in cheek. The problem with both of these methods is that they do not protect the player setting the screen from an aggressive player trying to avoid or worse go through the screen. Especially when working with young players we need to assist them in dealing with contact. If a player does not feel safe they will be hesitant. Asking a young player to set a screen on a bigger player without proper instructions is bound to lead to indecision.

Catch the player
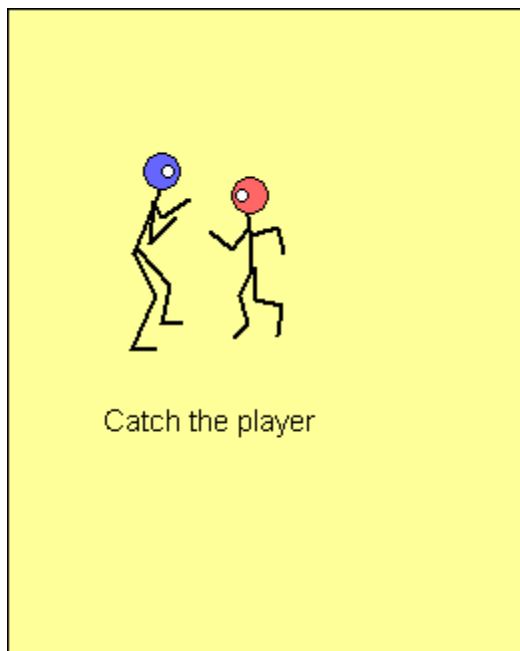
In setting a safe screen the player needs to be bent at the waist. This protects the groin area and allows the player to move if necessary. They are in a universal athletic stance. Be careful that it is not too wide. This leads to clipping the cutter with your knees and should be called a foul.

The arms need to be up like a boxer. (I suggest the hands touch just under the chin but extended away from the body). This allows the player to catch the cotter. If the cutter's hands come high the screener can protect their face. By having the hands extended you can absorb the collision. By taking the cutter on your forearms you can seal and also are less likely to be called for holding.

The other key reason for keeping the hands high is that we want the player to be a receiver after screening. Too often when players screen with the arms down they can never get the hands back up to catch the ball or the cutter pins the hands of the screener.

Screen area   Screen player
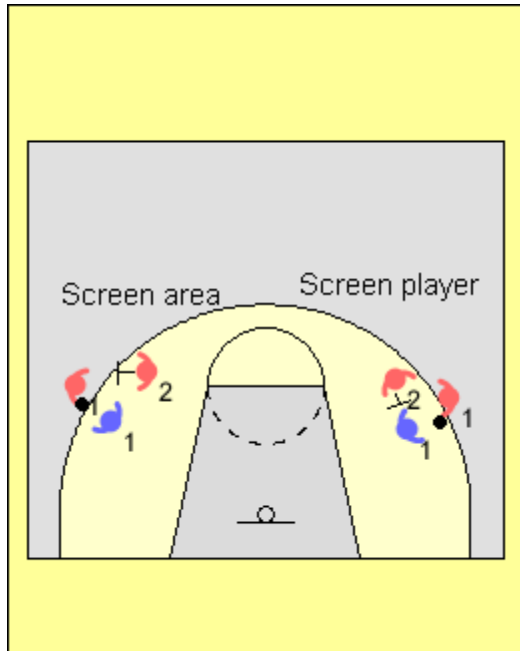
Where do you screen?

Do you teach your players to screen an area or to screen the player? When dealing with ball screens I have found that when we **screen an area** we are much more effective in having the **proper angle** set on the screen. We do have to be as concerned where the ball is caught. We can always set the perfect screen. We now work with the ball handler on delivering his/her check into the screen.

If we set **people screens** the angle is too often based on the angle of the defender. Too often we send the dribbler at a bad angle. Also if the ball is caught outside a prime operating area the screen is often ineffective.

I feel the same is true when screens are set off the ball. We want the good angles and spacing especially for slips. The key thing to teach is to set your check up and use the screen effectively.

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