



Conceptual Offense

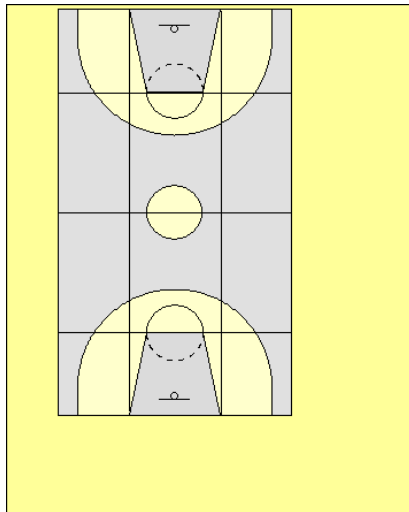
CB's Coaching Education and Development

Building Your Conceptual Offence

It is recommended with athletes in the FUNdamental, Learn to Train and the Train to Train stages of the Long Term Athlete Development Model that players learn to play a conceptual based offense; where they learn how to play, not plays.

Conceptual means that the offence is based on sound theories of basketball development that are appropriate for that stage of development. Similar to school, the players must master the skills and concepts for grade 1 before they jump ahead to grade 2. Also similar to school, all children learn all skills and concepts. When coaches put players in permanent positions at a young age it restricts the overall growth of the players. This very action at a young age, is one reason why a child may not have the necessary skills to play at an older age, when asked to play a different position.

What follows is an example of how the game can be taught to players in a progressive nature that is appropriate for their stage of development. This document does not cover all of the skills, break down drills or modified games required to teach the different concepts. Its purpose is to give an overview of the concepts and the stages in which they can be introduced.



The grid

Many team sports divide the playing area into a grid when teaching the game to younger players. The same idea can work for basketball in helping players understand the concept of space.

The court is divided horizontally into four zones

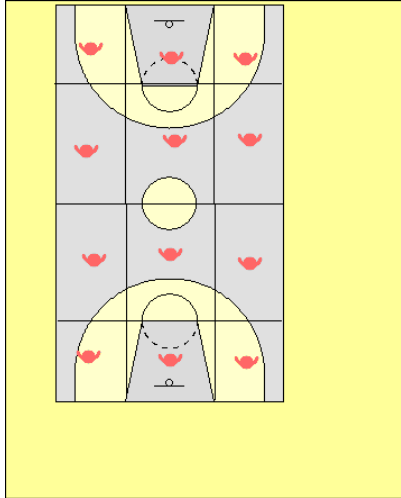
- Baseline to foul line extended
- Foul line extended to half court line
- Half court line to foul line extended
- Foul line extended to the baseline.

Vertically the court is divided into the three lanes;

- Right lane
- Centre lane
- Left lane.

This creates a court with 12 rectangles.



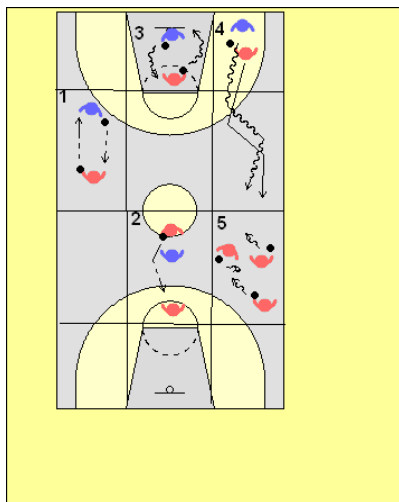


Finding space

When the coach asks the 12 players on the team to find space each player can find one of the 12 rectangles created.

You can do activities to help the players explore the space:

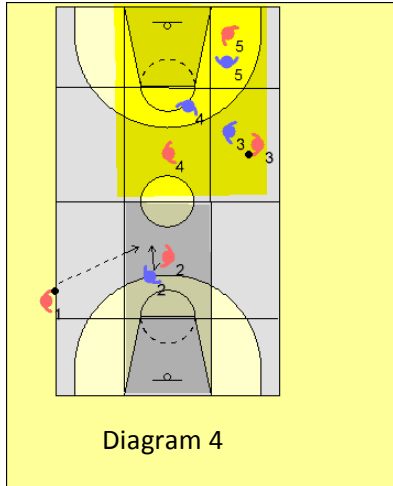
- Dribble around the perimeter of your space
- Find the center of your space
- Find the part closest to the far basket, side line, center circle
- Dribble in a figure of eight in your space



Small sided activities or drills

The grid also provides safe boundaries in which the players can do small drills or activities; for example:

1. Two ball partner passing
2. Pass and replace with pressure
3. Partner mirror dribbling
4. 1 on 1 in two spaces
5. Three player dribble protect



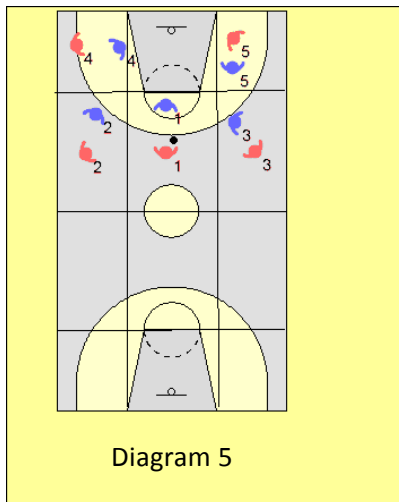
Modified games

The grid allows you to play small-sided games in various areas of the court. In bottom half of the court in diagram 4; the players are playing 1 on 1 in the middle two rectangles of the grid. The ball is inbounded from the sideline by red#1.

In the top of the diagram the players are playing 3 on 3. They can only use the part of the grid shaded yellow.

You as the coach can decide the restriction you place on the players:

- No dribbles (encourages passing and cutting to get open)
- Must pass shoot or dribble within one second of receiving the ball (encourages penetration and anticipation)
- No scoring in the key (work on shooting outside shots)



Using a games approach

Allow the players to play the game. The rules are modified to teach various concepts.

For example; it is a violation if two players are in the same rectangle of the grid when your team has the ball. The exception is when you get an offensive or defensive rebound. This forces the player to be aware of the positioning of their teammates.

It is using whole-part-whole teaching. The next step is to break down the areas where the players are having problems.

It is recommended in the Fundamental stage and the start of the Learn to Train stage that the players play 3 on 3 or 4 on 4. This gives them more touches on the ball and more room to execute their skills.

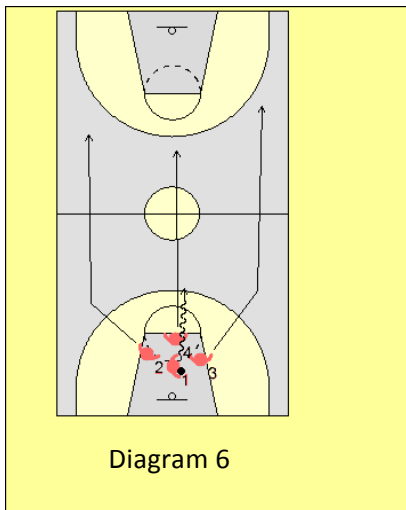
Teaching with concepts

Concept #1 – Attack the basket

The first concept that players must learn is to attack the basket. We use the word attack because eventually we want the players to be assertive in this action. As they progress, they will eventually play with a 24 second shot clock and an 8 second backcourt rule. The players can attack the basket with:

- *Their eyes* – they scan the basket to see if it is open or if a teammate has an advantage.
- *Their body* – by running the floor to the opponents basket when they gain possession of the ball
- *The ball* – by passing, dribbling and eventually shooting the ball at the basket.

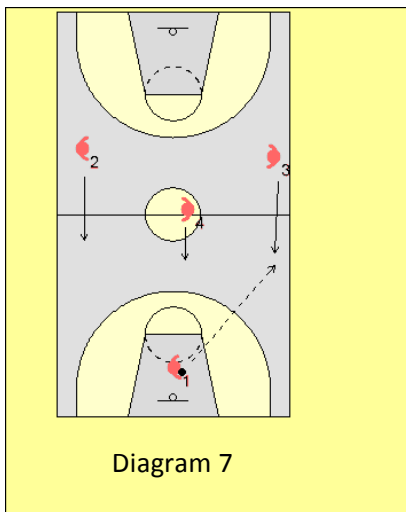
When using modified games such as 1 on 1, players need to learn to face the basket (triple threat). They then need to learn how to attack the basket by dribbling with either hands. This then leads to lay-ups and shooting. The final piece is to learn fakes.



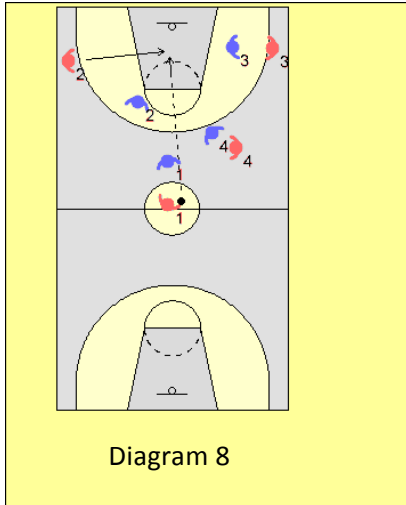
In diagram 6 four players start in the key. When possession is gained the three players without the ball attack the opponent's basket. They are encouraged to spread the floor and not run in the same space as their teammates. The player with the ball attacks the basket with his/her eyes first and then makes the decision to pass or dribble. This is based on;

- Is a teammate open who has an advantage?
- Does the player have the strength and skill to get the ball to that teammate?

The player may have to dribble to shorten the distance of the pass or to create a better passing angle.



If the ball handler is in trouble his/her teammates must cut back to help.



If a player sees that there is no one between him/her and the basket the player can attack the basket with his/her body. This is done by a basket cut.

In diagram 8, we can see that defensive player blue #2 is caught looking at the ball. This leaves an open basket for red #2 to attack.

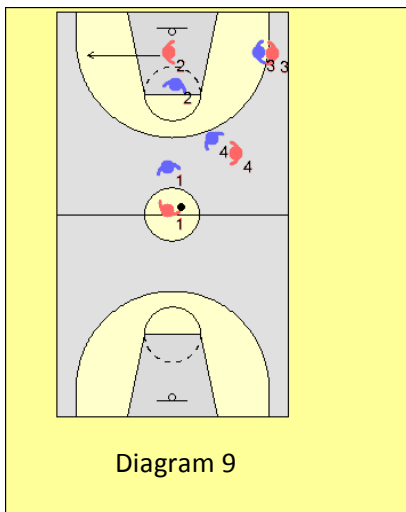
Concept #2 – Space

More often than not the basket is not open for an attack:

- The player with the ball cannot deliver the pass because they do not see or do not have the strength to deliver the pass.
- A defender is in a good position between the offensive player and the basket.
- Another offensive player is already at the basket.

When this occurs, the players without the ball must learn to create space. This is where the grid becomes a valuable teaching tool. Sometimes you can use pylons or markers to teach spots, but we have found that players use these as crutches. It is more important that they understand the concept of spacing than be trained to stand on a spot:

- Should I be close or far away from my defender
- Should I move away from my teammate with the ball or should I be close to him/her



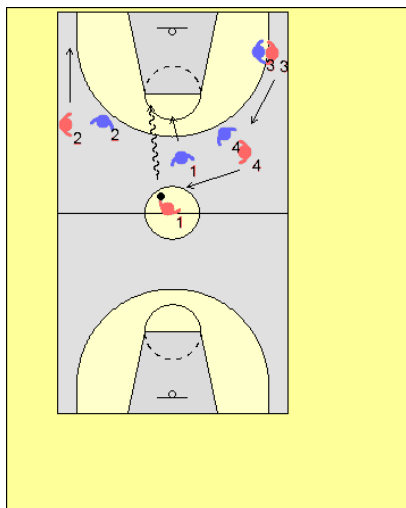
In diagram 9, red #2 realizes that red #1 cannot pass the ball because the distance is too far and there are defenders in the way. Understanding the concept of space, red #2 vacates the key to the open space in the corner. This action now keeps the basket open for another player to eventually attack the basket.

The other players know they cannot attack the basket until the space is open.

Please see the document for **Toss drills** for some drills to work on these two concepts.

Concept #3 – Penetration principles

We like to teach penetration next, because it is the skill that players will do first. It is easier for a child to dribble than to pass. When we teach the movement in relationship to the dribble, easier passes will develop. The basic concept is circle motion or push/pull. If you are dribbled at, you move away. If the dribble is away from you, you are pulled. There are exceptions to the rule but you need to get the players to understand the concept of making space first.



In diagram 10, you can see that red #1 dribbles to the open space on the left side. Red #2 is pushed to the open space in the corner. Red #4 and #3 are pulled. If the defence helps the player looks to make the pass.

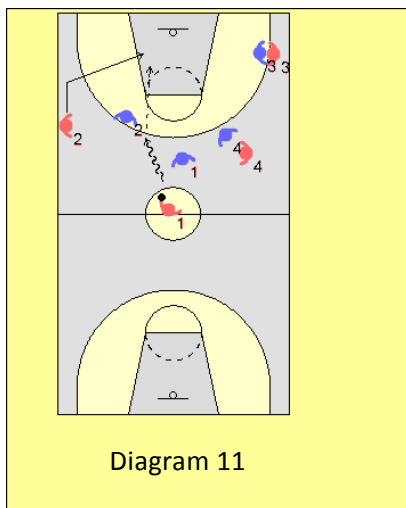


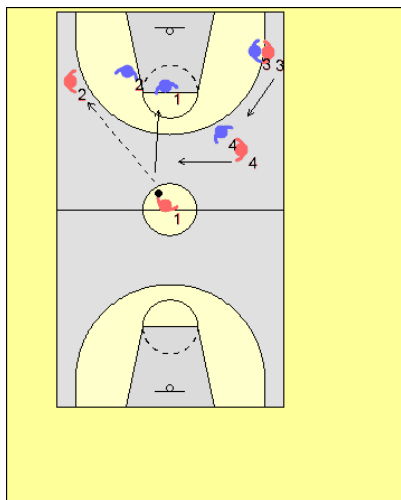
Diagram 11

In diagram 11 we can see that the rule of “attack the basket” still holds true. As red #1 dribbled to the basket, blue #2 helped up on defence. This created an open basket allowing red #2 to cut to receive the pass for the lay-up.

Players must not forget one concept as they learn another. This layering of concepts is so important to the teaching process.

Concept #4 – Pass cut fill

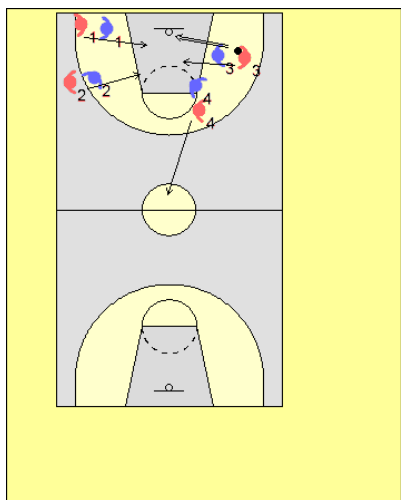
Once the players begin to make passes we need to add the concept of pass cut fill. After passing the player cuts to the basket. If the basket is covered; this could be because the defender is in the direct line or another teammate is at the basket, the player must find open space.



In Diagram 12 red #1 passes to red #2. Red#1 cuts to the basket. Blue #1 who has blocked the path to the basket. Red #1 would now seek out open space. The other players rotate to fill the open space.

Concept #5 – Rebounding and defensive coverage

Once the offence starts to shoot the ball, you need to introduce the concept of rebounding and protecting the defensive basket. There are many different strategies for teaching this but most are based on labeling the players by positions. One conceptual way to teach the rebounding concept is to base it by your position on the floor when the shot is taken. Those players below the foul line extended should go for a rebound. Those players above the foul line extended move back to become safeties and prevent the open basket.

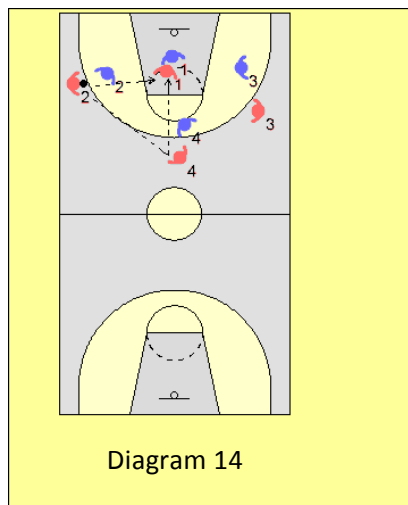


In diagram 13, red #3 shoots the ball. Red #1, red #2 and red #3 go for the offensive rebound because they are below the foul line. Red #4 moves back as a safety.

Using these concepts allows all players to learn the skill of rebounding and defensive coverage.

Concept #6– Post or seal at the rim

The next progression is for players to learn to use their body to seal or block the defender. This allows the player to catch the ball in an advantageous position close to the basket. The other players must keep their spacing to allow for the easy passing angle. Here players learn the concept of passing angles and relay passes.



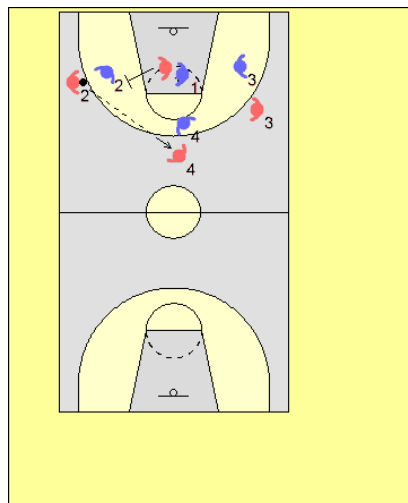
Red #1 cut to the basket and realized that his/her defender was in a poor position. He sealed the defender at the front of the rim. The other players keep their spacing and form triangles that allow for passes to be made to the player. Red #2 can make the pass directly or relay the ball through red #4 if he/she has the better angle.

Note: This is a concept that may not be introduced until players reach the Train to Train stage. We would rather players master the first five concepts than be introduced to a concept before they have the skills or physical maturity.

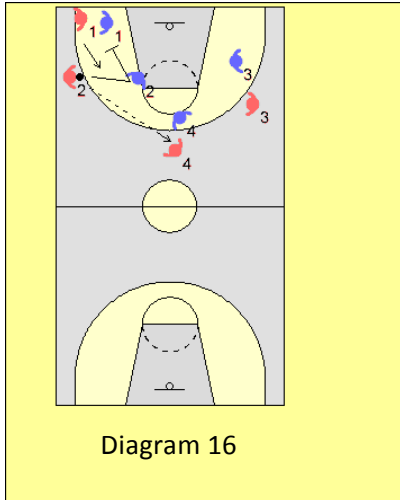
Using the school analogy again; you don't take a child in grade 4 math and teach them calculus.

Concept #7 – Screening

These are advanced concepts that should not be taught until the train to train stage. The problem is that they will work when used at the younger ages. This can produce short term wins but often prevents the players from learning other valuable skills and mastering the base concepts.

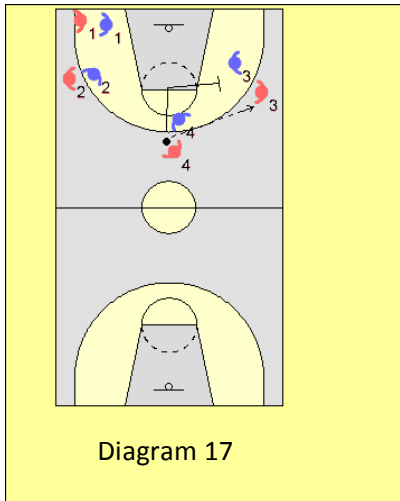


In diagram 15 red #1 set a screen for red #2. This is a way for the player at the basket to create an open basket for a teammate.



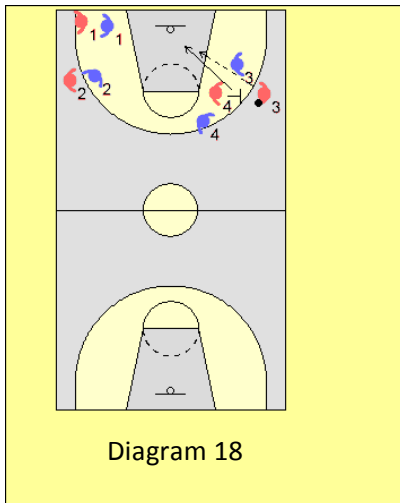
Another way to add screening is for the player who has passed, when the basket cut is no longer open, to screen for the player who will fill his/her space.

In diagram 16, after red #2 passed to the top he/she cut to the basket. When the defender stopped the cut red #2 went and screened for red #1 who would normally fill that spot.



Ball screen

Screens can also be set on the ball. In this example in diagram #16, red #4 goes and screen for the player with the ball, red #3, after setting the pass. The basket cut was run first.



The “attack the open basket” rule still holds true when setting screens. When red #4 sets the ball screen, if blue #4 shows to early an open lane to the basket is created. Red #4 slips to the open basket.

If players are taught to master these concepts and the skills required to execute them at the Train to Train stage of development, they will have the fundamental and technical skill package required for the Train to Compete stage. Using just these seven concepts the coach has a varied arsenal to allow for differences of philosophy. One team emphasize pass cut fill while another may stress penetration. The key is that all players are taught all skills and concepts in a progressive nature.