

Atom House Leagues - Person-to-Person Defence

Halfcourt person-to-person defence is played in the NBBA atom house leagues. Defensive players must drop back to centre as soon as the other team takes control of the ball in their back-court and the offensive player must be allowed to dribble across the centre line. Intentional double-teaming is not permitted.

The atom coaches teach person-to-person defence, which includes positions for defenders away from the ball (e.g. deny a pass). They do not teach much less use zone defences, where all (or some) defenders guard an area of the floor. If one or more players start “zoning up” during a game (e.g. just standing in the 3-second area to protect the basket), the onus is on their coaches to take corrective action (“stay with your check”). Some players may unintentionally zone-up when they are tired or not sure what to do, and should also be reminded to stay with their check.

The league rule prevents intentional double-teams, where one defender deliberately leaves their check to go trap the ball. It does not prevent a situation where an attacker happens to dribble right at a team-mate’s defender.

The double-team rule also does not prevent good help defence. If a defender guarding the ball gets beat off the dribble, another defender is permitted to help stop the ball, which may result in a brief period when both defenders are guarding the ball, but then one of the two defenders must recover to the attacker who is open (help and recover, or switch). Again, the onus is on coaches to teach help rotation, and take corrective action during games (e.g. “get back to your check”). At this age and level of play, patience is needed by everyone.

Going forward, the role of house-league referees will be to help coaches by observing and reporting any problems (e.g. during a dead ball or at half-time) and reminding coaches to instruct their players as needed. The referees will not be enforcing league defensive rules, e.g. calling double-teams.

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