

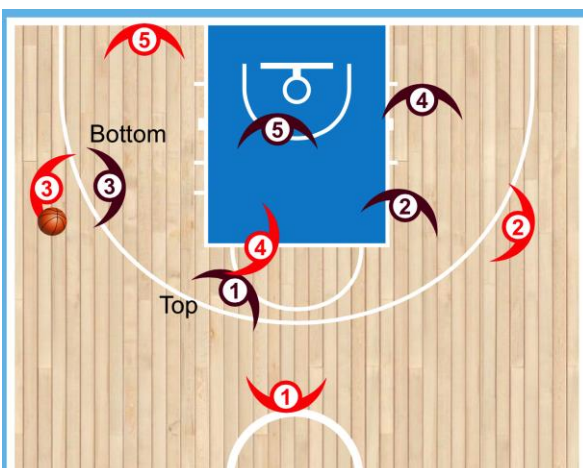
Zone Offensive Terms

Concept # 1 – Know who is guarding the ball and the different areas on the floor.



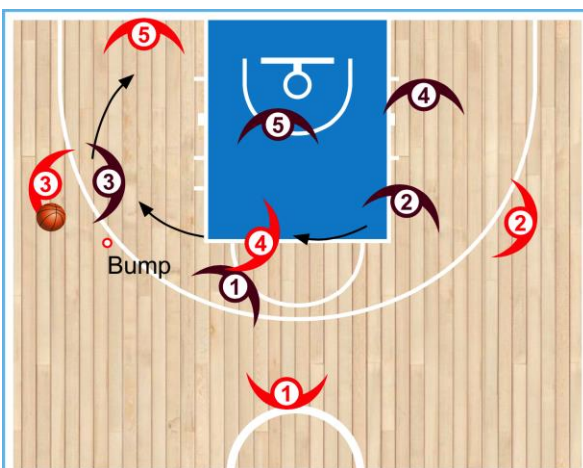
Who is guarding the ball?

It is important when the ball is on the wing that we determine which defender is guarding the ball. In the example to the left we can see that the **top defender** is on the ball. This usually is an indication to look for the high post or a reversal.



Who is guarding the ball on the reversal?

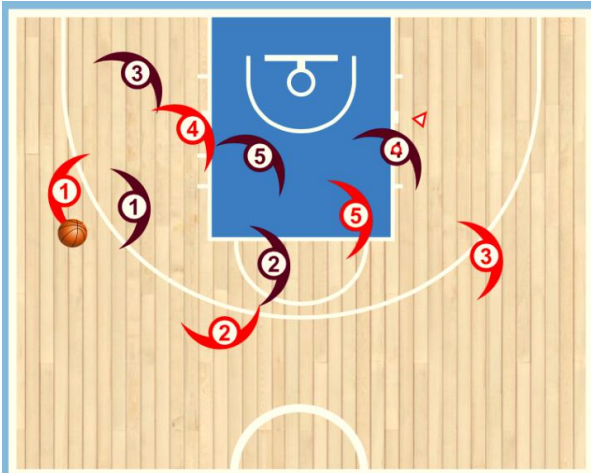
When the ball is reversed most often it will be the **bottom person** in the zone who will guard the ball. This means we can look to use our short corner person.



Bumping

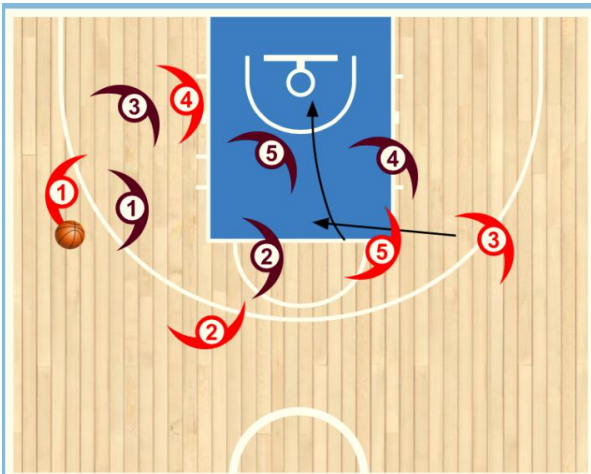
Most teams that play zone will employ a bumping action to ensure that the low defender does not get caught on the ball when there is a corner or short corner player. The nearest top defender will move to cover the ball, **BUMPING** the bottom defender to defend the player in the short corner.

There is a brief moment when the defense is vulnerable.

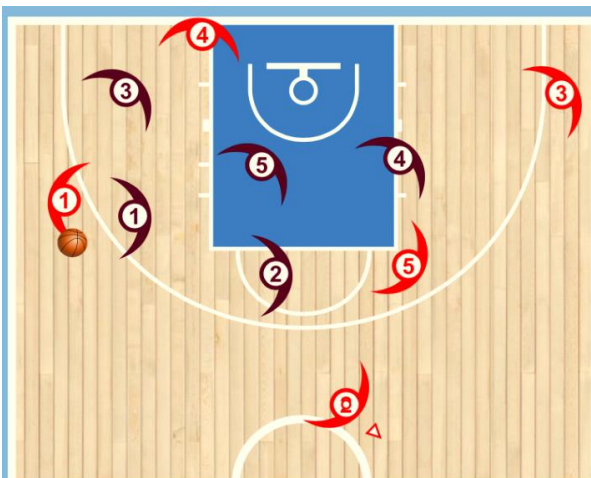


Who is guarding the spots on the floor?

When the offence plays with poor spacing it allows the defensive players to guard more than one player at a time. In the example to the left we can see that every offensive player without the ball has a defender behind her that can shoot the gap. This allows the defense to be sneaky and play the eyes of the passer. Since the offensive players are so close together there is little room for dribbling and the passes must be very precise.

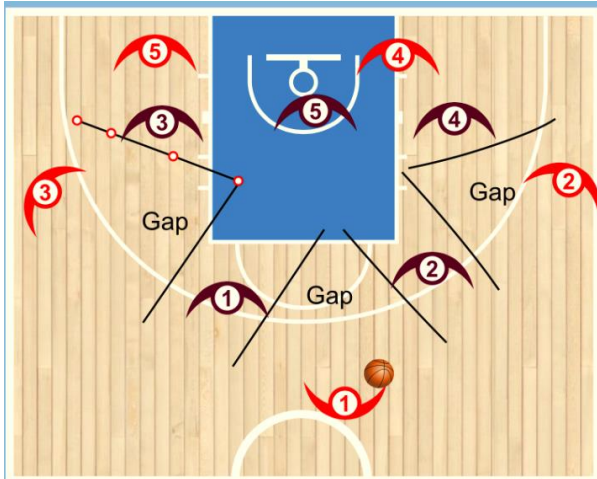


If the offence has poor spacing off the ball, even if the players cut there is little room to find openings.



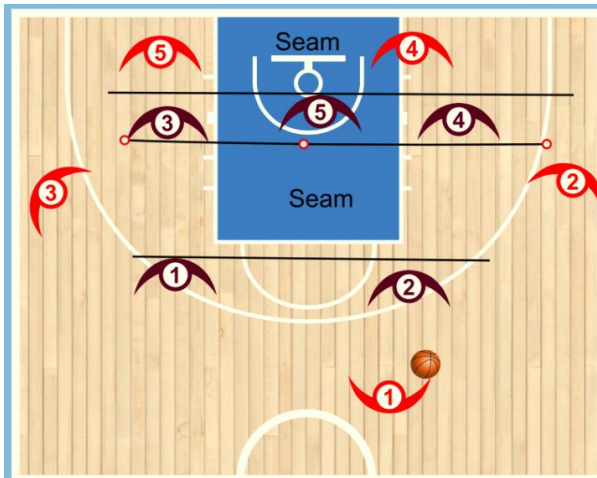
Spread the floor

In this example all of the offensive players without the ball are **behind the shoulders** of an off-ball defender. You will also notice that they are not **crowding the line**. This allows the offense to be sneaky. It puts the defense in a position where they cannot see ball and man. They will have to spread out to see. This now starts to create **gaps** and **seams**.



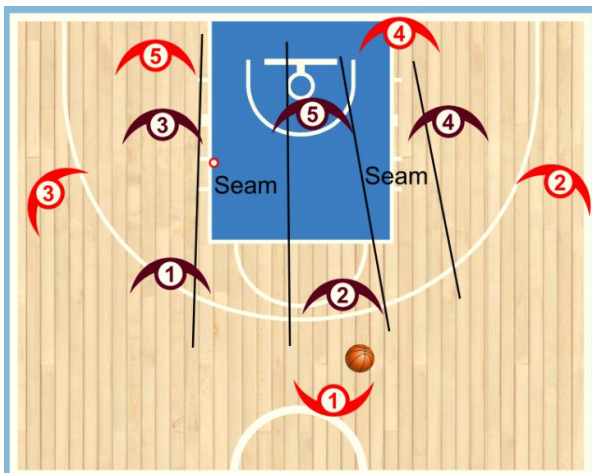
Gaps

These are the spaces between two players on the exterior of the zone. The wider the gaps the more room for penetration and the longer the time required for a close out by the defender.



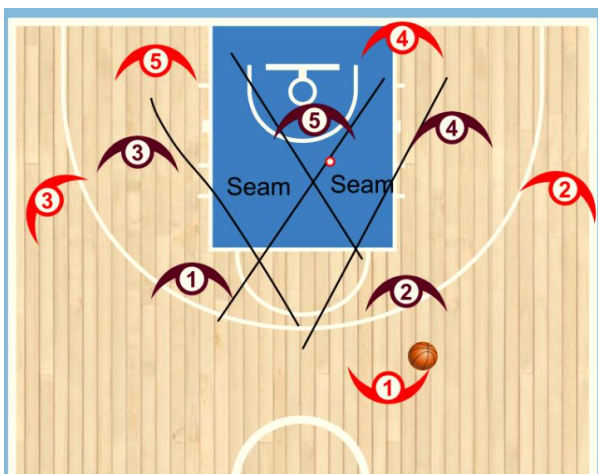
Horizontal seams

The horizontal seams are the creases between the front line and back line of the defense. There is also a horizontal crease between the backrow and the baseline.



Vertical seams

These are the creases found between the left, right and centre of the defenders.



Diagonal seams

These are the creases found diagonally between the defenders.

Seams are great areas to cut and to pass.

Concept #2 - Cutters

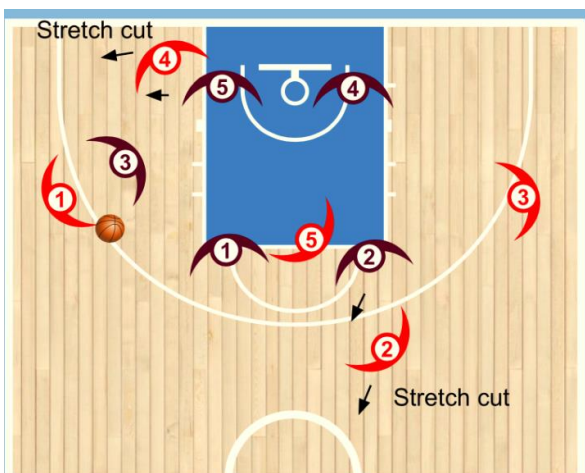
Similar to our man-to-man offence we want to put pressure on the rim by constantly cutting. This makes us hard to guard by

- Forcing the defense to collapse
- Creating communication problems and confusion
- Creating fouls
- Producing inside scoring opportunities
- Getting us better offensive rebounding position

Our cuts need to be made with speed and purpose. Know if you are cutting:

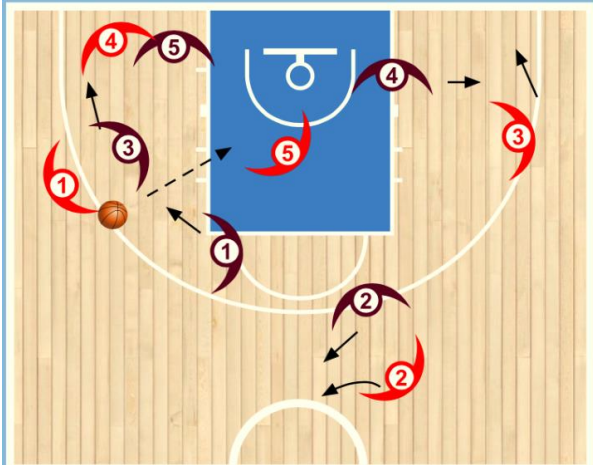
- Across the face of the defender or sneaking behind
- To seal or to space
- To influence a defender or to get open for the ball

The player in the high post is the key person in initiating the cutting action. If she is stagnant there will be little movement to the rim by the other players.



Stretch cut

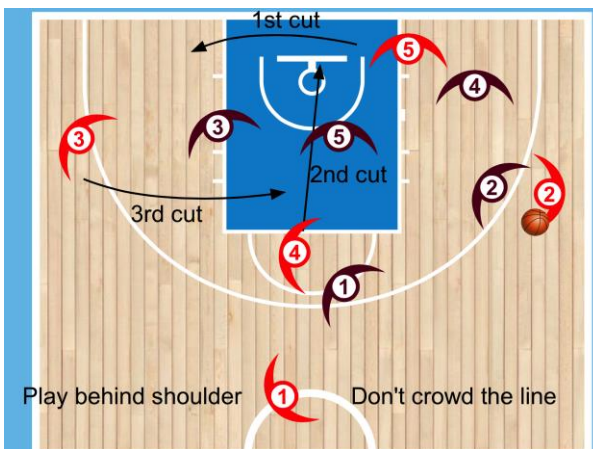
The subtle movement by offensive players to force defenders out of their comfort zone. The one or two extra steps that can distract and move a defender one step away from a gap or seam are son important in opening up our interior cuts.



As we see in the example to the left, by the stretch cut by:

- #4 forced the ball side defense into executing a bump action. This occupied three defenders.
- #3 stretched X4 by moving below her shoulder
- #2 backed up and stretched X2 and distracted her from the middle.

The result of these actions was leaving the middle unguarded.

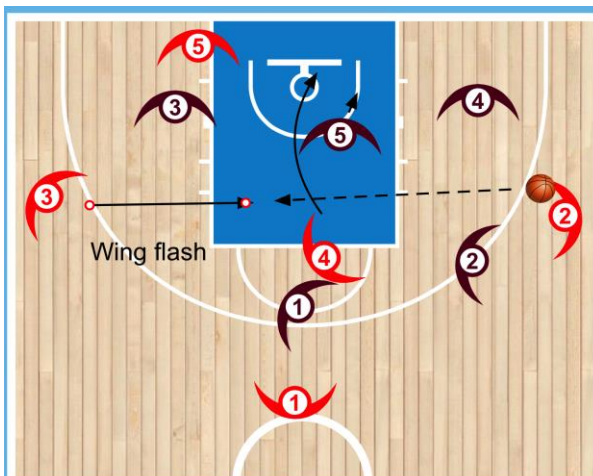


In the example to the left we can see that the top player is defending the wing. #5 on offence decide to cut away from the ball side short corner to the help side short corner. This is not a cut to get the ball, but it is more to influence the bottom defender X3. The high post #4 cuts hard to the rim going behind the middle defender X5. This is again an influence cut. It draws the defenders attention. We now have a third cut by #3 into the key. This is a scoring cut.

It was the first two cuts that set up the third. If those players do not move we have no rim attack on the third cut. Also the perimeter players must be patient. Too often they want to move the ball too quickly missing the open cutters.

Flash cut

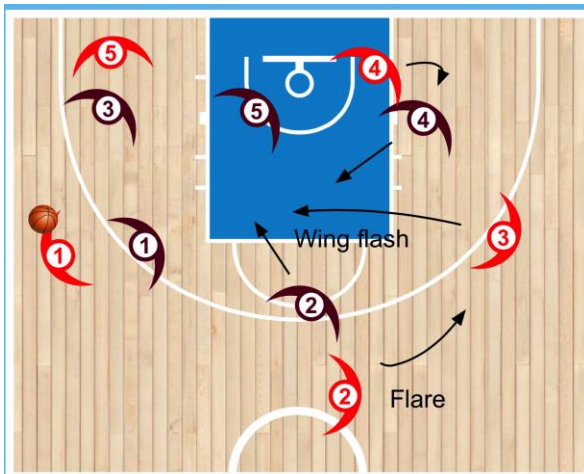
The best cut to attack the heart of the zone is the flash cut. This is a cut to space not to seal. We are looking to find a hole in the middle of the zone.



Wing flash

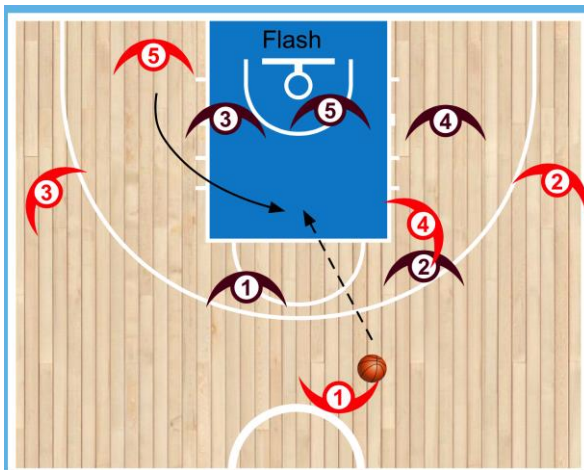
The most effective flash is the opposite wing flashing after the high post cuts. The top off ball defender is often blind to this cutter. The high post want to cut hard to the rim to occupy the middle defender.

The wing must think shot on this catch. It is a no dribble zone. You will see your pass if you think shot. If you think pass you will often not see the shot.



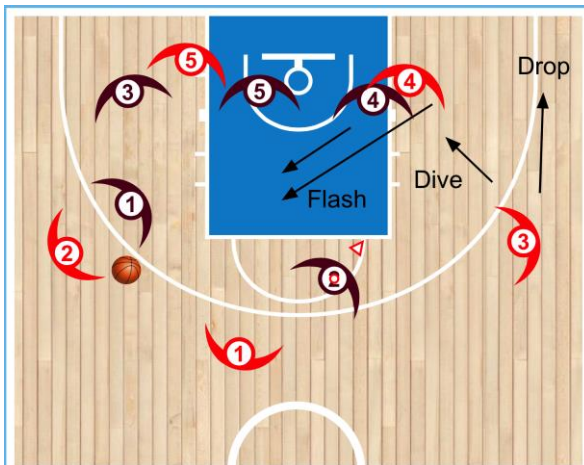
Wing flash, top flare

Over time the defense will expect this wing flash. This is now an influence cut since it occupies two defenders. #2 flares to open space behind this cut. #4 is preparing to play out of the short corner if X4 runs to guard #3.



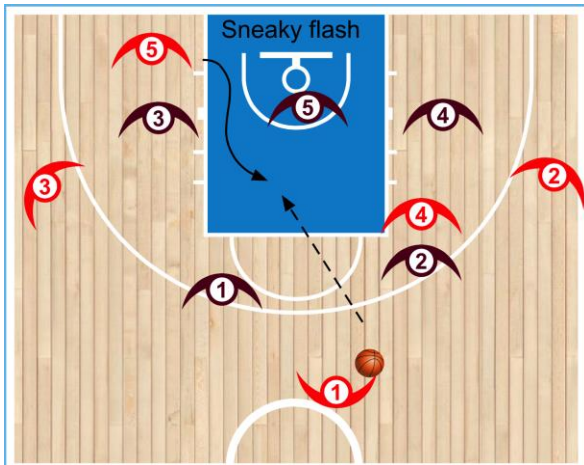
Short corner flash

Another way to flash is from the opposite short corner. In this case the player crosses her face and is seen by the bottom defender X3.



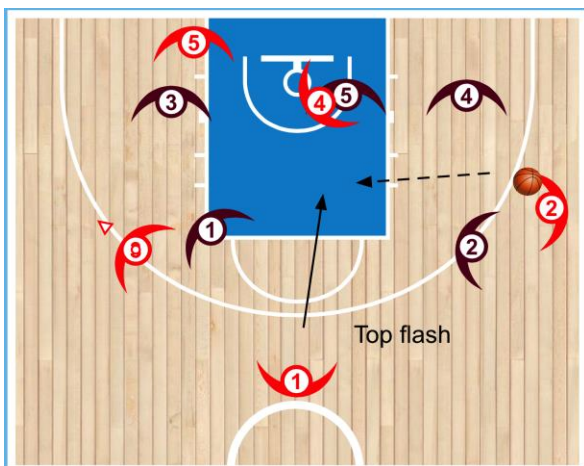
Short corner flash and drop/dive

When the short corner flashes very often she will influence the bottom defender to go with her. This leaves space open behind her for either a **DROP** (slide down) or a **DIVE** (rim cut) by #3. This action is very effective for rebounding vs. the zone as well.



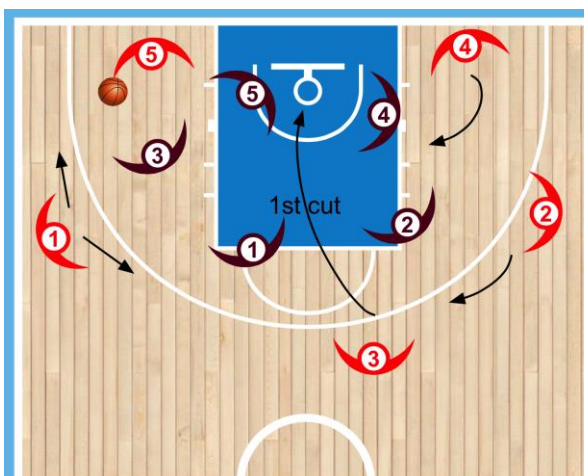
Sneaky flash

A sneaky flash is when we cut behind the head of the defender rather than crossing her face. These cuts force the defenders to be aware of the players behind them. This takes away their vision on the ball for a brief moment.



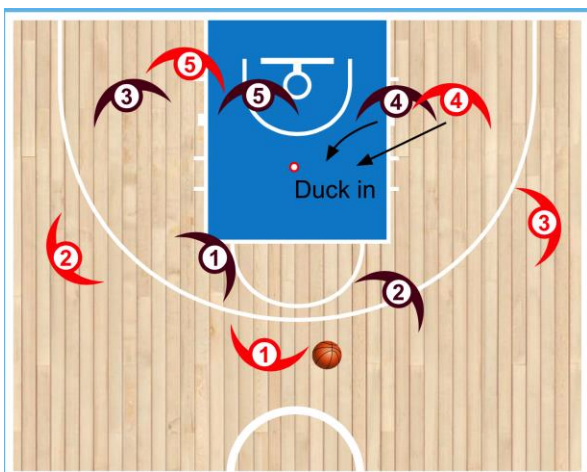
Top flash

This is not as common, but can occur when the off side top defender stays wide to prevent the help side wing from cutting.



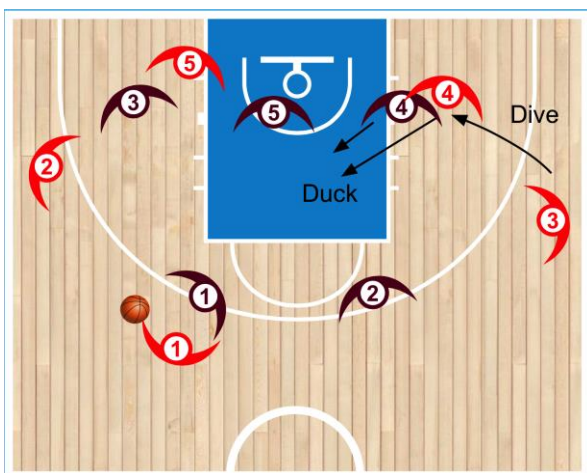
Top flash when ball in the short corner

This is the best time for this cut because there is a tendency for the defenders to turn and look at the ball, therefore missing the cutter.



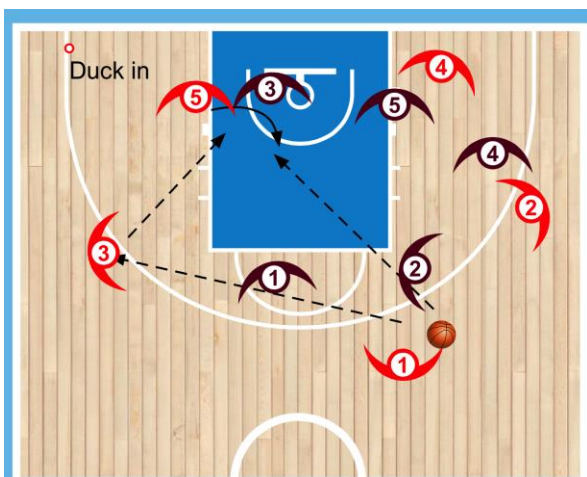
Duck in

A duck in is similar to a flash except that we maintain a seal on the player as we cut. Holding the seal is more important than cutting to the open space.



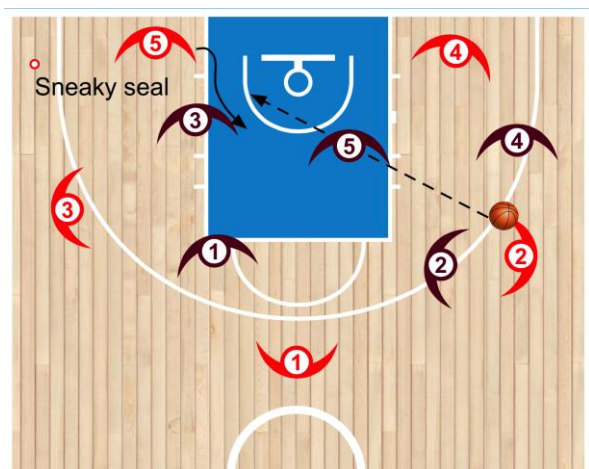
Duck and dive (drop)

This is similar to the flash and dive except that we are sealing bottom defender #4 on the dive. This makes it harder to defend #3 on her dive.



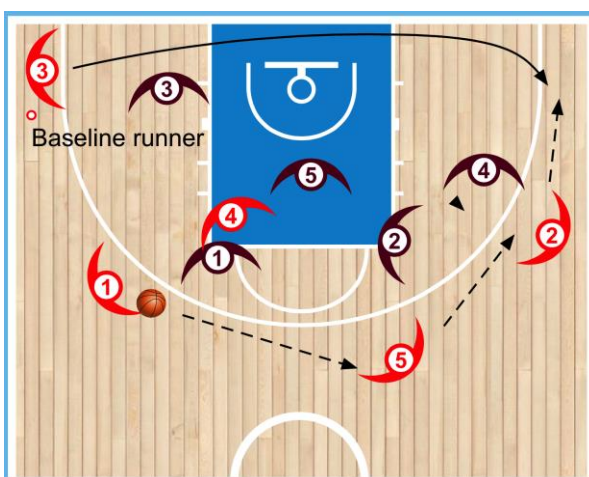
Duck in triangle pass

Often the duck in sets up the triangle pass into the key. We do not want the post up on the block. We are posting the bottom player not the middle.

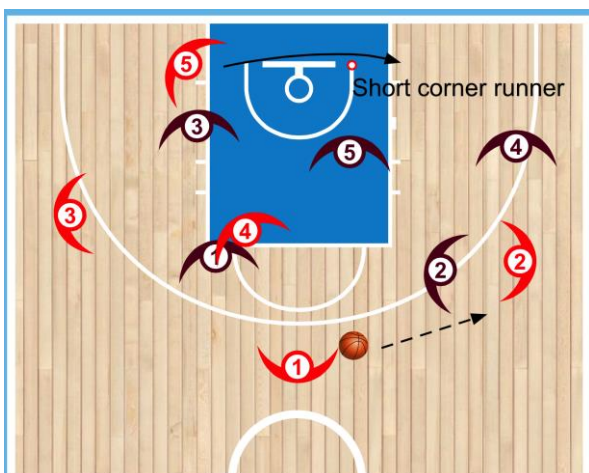


Sneaky seal

If we cut behind the head of the bottom defender and step up and maintain contact this is called a **sneaky seal**. It is very effective against a smaller bottom defender. The pass is along the diagonal seam.

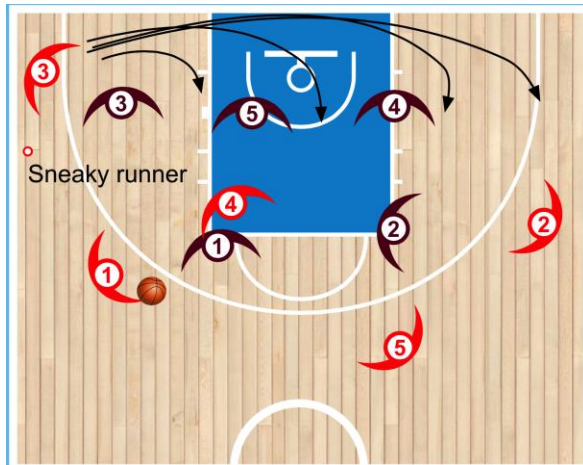


Another cut is a **baseline runner**. This is when the offensive player cuts from one corner to the other. It is important to get set in the corner to receive the pass. It is difficult to get the feet set outside the three point line in this narrow space when moving.



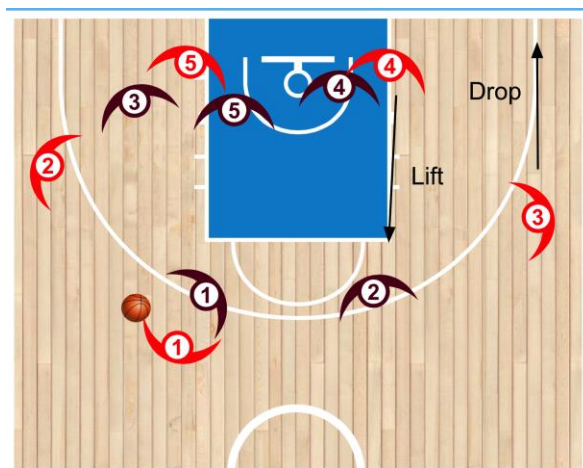
Short corner runner

The offensive player runs behind the defense from short corner to short corner.



Sneaky runner

The sneaky runner has the option to duck in or flash to any of the seams as she runs the baseline.



Lift and drop

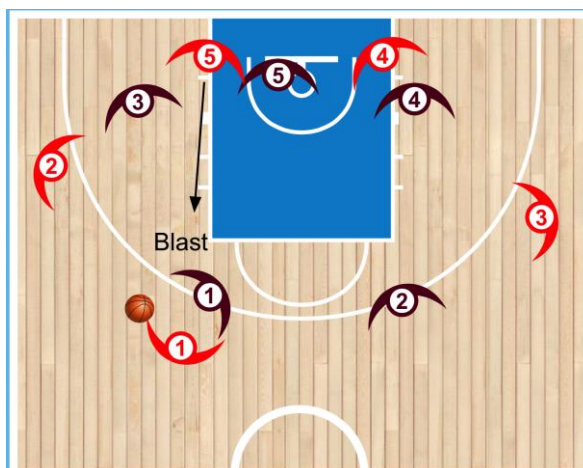
These are not scoring cuts but cuts to establish position for future action or to distract the defense by making a hole for someone else or stretching the defense.

Lift

Rise up from the baseline. This is usually on the help side.

Drop

Move towards to baseline. This is usually on the help side.



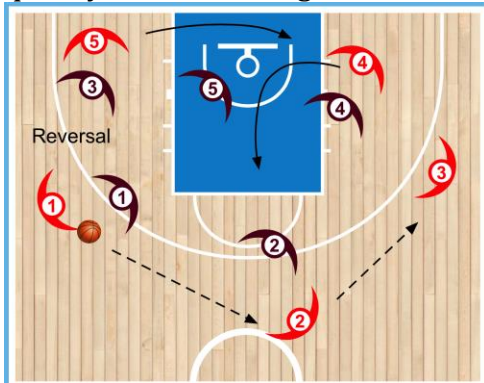
Blast

Similar to man-to-man it is a direct line cut to the ball.

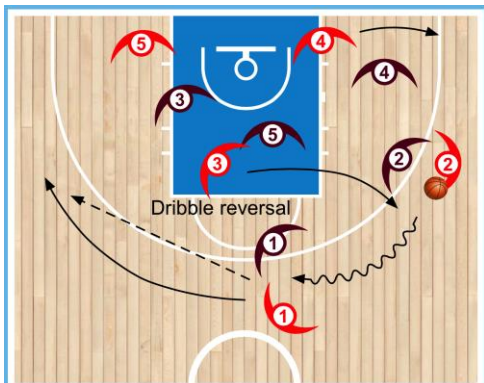
Reversing the ball

The second important concept vs. the zone defense is to reverse the ball from one side of the floor to the other. This again makes it difficult for the defense to match up. Our cutting action works best when the ball is reversed. **Note:** One of the biggest problems when attacking the zone is when the perimeter players move or reverse the ball too

quickly without seeing the interior players. The ball is reversed for a purpose.

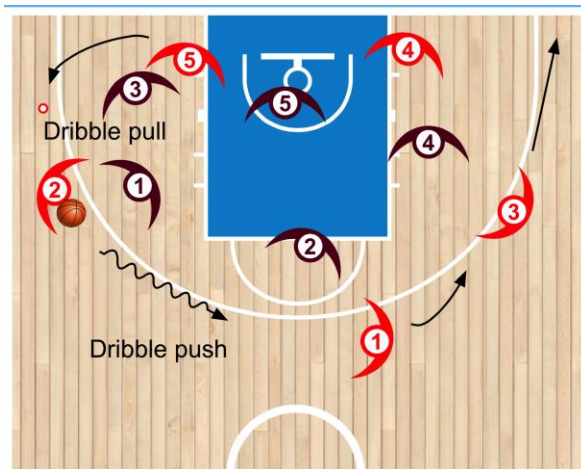


Here we can see the ball being reversed through the perimeter players. Notice that #2 is well off the three-point line. She needs to be in a position where she can easily catch the ball and make the pass without pressure. Do not crowd the line.



Dribble reversal

Very often the ball can be dribbled to reverse it. The dribbler needs to have vision to read who is guarding who. The other players are pushed and pulled in relation to the dribble.

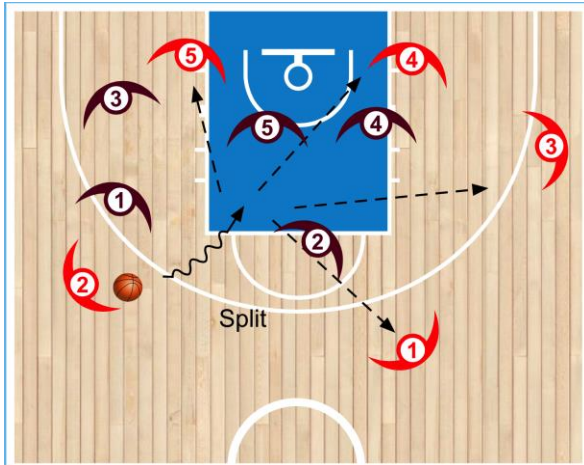


Dribble pull

The offensive player behind the ball or on the backside follows the dribbler. She is open if the defender on the dribbler X1 stays with the dribble.

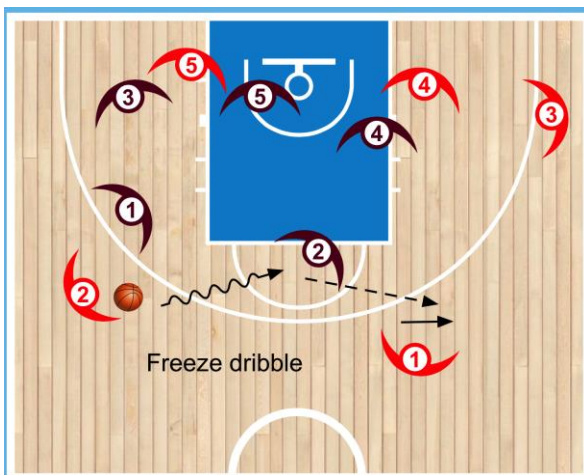
Dribble push

The player on the front side is pushed away on the dribble. She will often be open when the next perimeter player X2 picks up the dribbler.



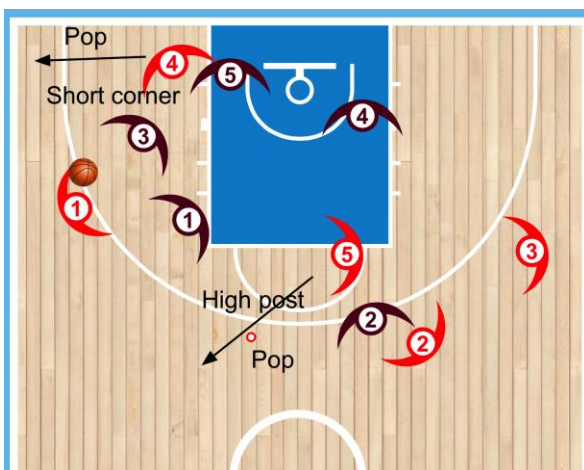
Split

A split occurs when the ball handler dribbles between the two defenders. If accomplished it puts tremendous pressure of the defense. The problem is that this is a very difficult skill to execute at all times. The ball handler must make quick decisions quickly vs. numerous defenders.



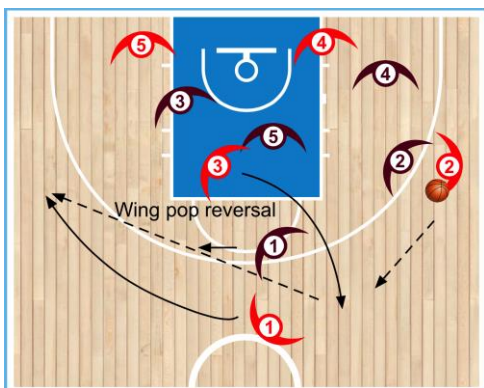
Freeze

When the ball handler dribbles at the defender in the zone she **freezes** this defender. It allows the offence to slide a player into the hole that this defender would normally defend.



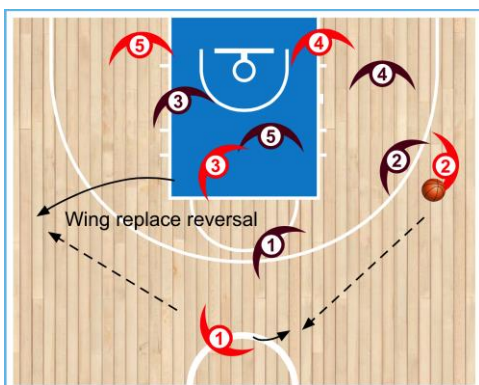
Pop

Very often we can **POP** a player to reverse or shoot the ball. A pop is when someone from the inside moves to occupy a perimeter position. This can often distort the defensive coverage as an extra player is now in the mix.



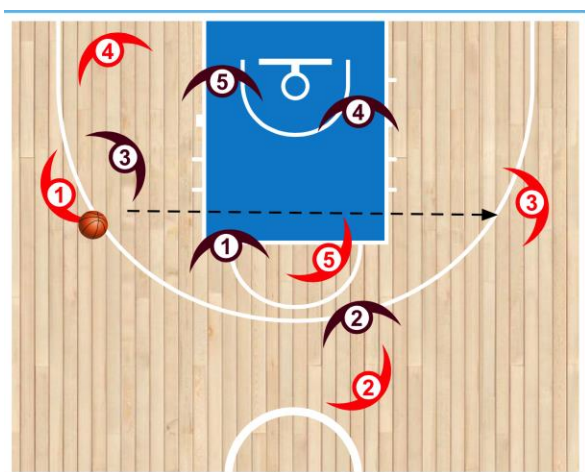
Cutter pop reversal

In this example the wing flash cutter pops to reverse the ball. It is important to pop to a spot that forces the defense to move out of their comfort zone. Be careful of popping to a space where the next defender can easily shoot the gap.



Cutter replace cut reversal

This is similar to a pop since the interior player replaces herself to the perimeter spot. Vs. man-to-man this is not recommended.

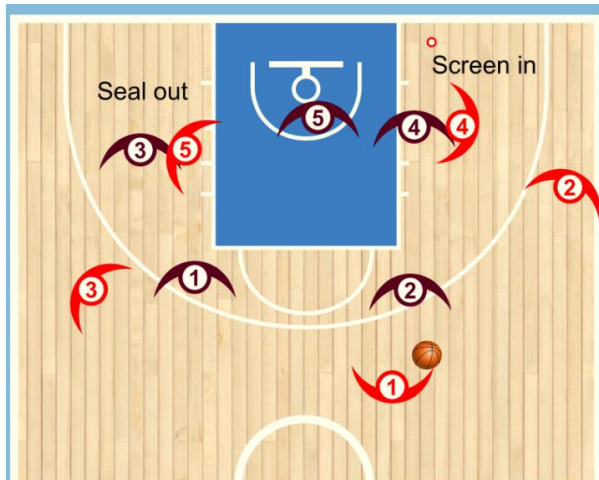


Skip pass

The final way to skip the ball is to throw the ball from the ball side to the help side directly. This is called a **skip**.

The perimeter players must be careful not to skip the ball without checking the interior players. Too many skips makes it difficult for the interior player to stay in synch with the perimeter players.

Concept#3 – Screen and seal the zone



Concept #4- Rebound

Screen in

We can screen a defender to prevent her from moving to defend a perimeter shooter.

Screen release

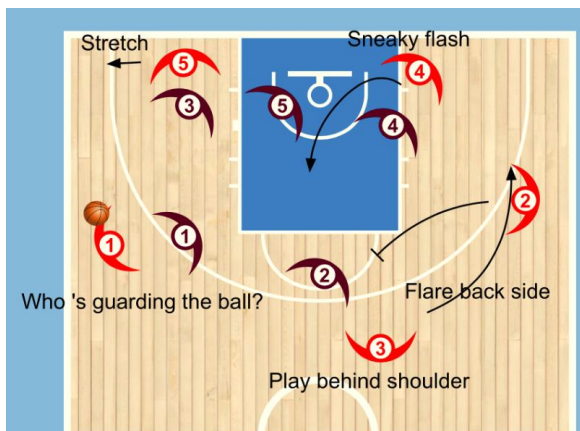
After screening release that defender and go find the next player and seal her.

Seal out

Box out the perimeter player to prevent her from protecting the basket.

We use the same terms as man-to-man:

- Hotspot
- Short spot
- Clean up
- Long and short safety



Put it all together

It works best when we combine the concepts. Here we see the offensive players stretching the zone, flashing and screening. This put tremendous pressure on the defense to move and communicate.