



BASIC MOTION OFFENSE

15

**PROVEN DRILLS AND PLAYS FOR
A HIGH-SCORING MOTION OFFENSE**

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Introduction

The motion offense has been around for more than 70 years, and despite the games evolution in that time, its principles have remained firmly entrenched at all levels of basketball, regardless of the type of offense a team runs.

This is because the basic concepts of motion offense – movement and screens away from the ball, with the freedom for players to read the defense and react accordingly – will always be effective tactics. There is a big difference between guarding a pick and roll, and guarding a pick and roll after a flare screen while your teammate is getting a backscreen set on him.

While some motion offenses are strictly read and react, in this playbook we're going to have a look at some set plays that use motion concepts to produce easy baskets. We'll also have a look at a couple drills, that should give your players a chance to develop the skills necessary to thrive in a motion offense.

V-Cut Drill

Purpose

To teach players how to get open to receive an entry pass on the wing.

Setup

For this drill, you'll bring out three pairs of similarly matched players and have them spread out around the arc – one pair up top, and one on each wing, lined up offense versus defense. The player at the top of the arc on offense will start with a ball.

Execution

The goal of this drill is to give players a chance to work on their v-cuts, and that is how the drill will start. When the coach signals the start of the drill, both wings will perform V-cuts. The point guard will hit one of the players, who will then catch and pivot, getting into triple threat position immediately. The drill will continue with the point guard then performing a V-cut of his own to get open at the top of the arc. Once he has received the ball back again, the wing players will try to get open once more.

After two successful wing entries, the drill will go live, with the offense getting one shot to try and put the ball in the hoop.

Coaching Tips

The V-cut is a simple but extremely important and effective technique for getting open on the wing. The offensive player will take a couple hard steps toward the hoop, plant, and explode back up to the wing and towards the ball, tracing a 'V' shape on the court with their feet. The key to a successful V-cut is really selling the cut towards the hoop, as if the defense doesn't feel the need to drop with the back cut, they will still be in position to defend the cut back to the wing.

It can also be very effective to make contact with the defender at the bottom of the cut, using a little push-off to get the offensive player an edge and keep the defender off-balance.

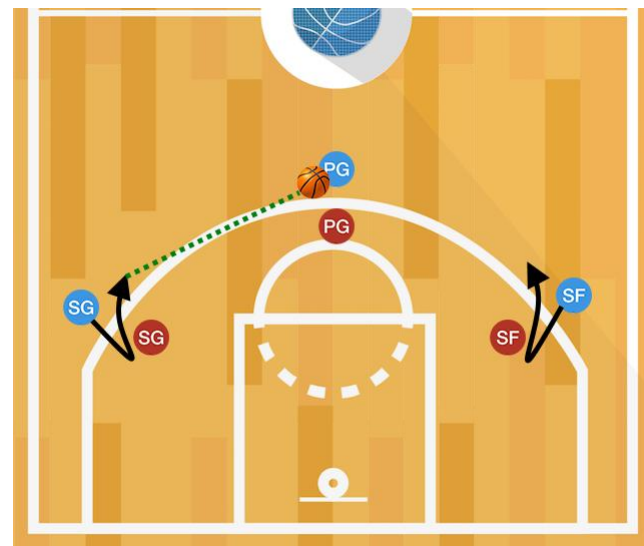


Figure 1: V-Cut Drill

Flare Screen/Curl Screen Drill

Purpose

To teach players the basics of wing to wing screen action.

Setup

You'll start this drill with three offensive players, two on the wing and one up top. As the drill progresses, you can add a defensive player to the player getting screened, then the screener, and finally, full three on three defense.

Execution

The point guard up top will start with the ball, initiating the drill with a pass to a wing – in Figure 1, it's the shooting guard. From there, the point guard will head over to the small forward and set a screen for him. The small forward will curl to the basket, receive the pass from the shooting guard, and make a layup. Alternatively, after the point guard passes to the shooting guard, the small forward will come up and set a screen for the point guard, allowing him to flare over to the left wing to receive a pass from the shooting guard, ready to catch and shoot.

Coaching Tips

It's important you teach players the basics of how to set a screen correctly, to avoid both injury and the illegal screen call. They need to have their feet spread about shoulder width apart, completely stationary, and with their hand in a position on their body to protect themselves – either arms crossed or covering the groin. It's also important that screeners angle their screens correctly. They should always have their back pointed to the target – AKA wherever we're trying to get the screener open.

It's just as important that the player using the screen know what he's doing so as to most effectively use the screen. First they need to set their man up – a misdirection step to the side opposite they want to go before using the screen goes a long way. They also need to come tight, shoulder to shoulder with the screener, so that the defender doesn't have the space to squeeze through.

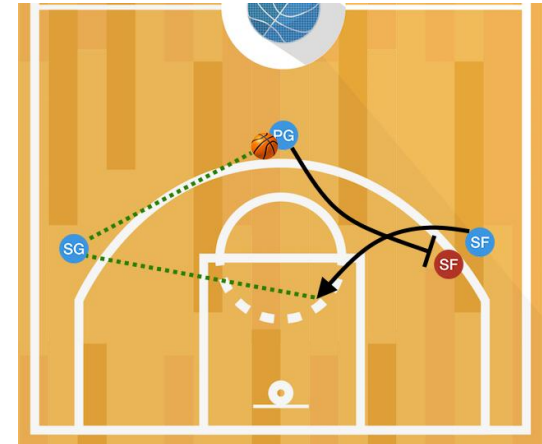


Figure 1: Curl Screen

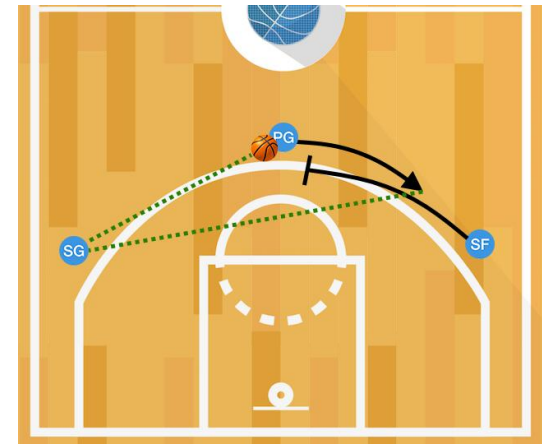


Figure 2: Flare Screen

Feeding the Post

Purpose

To teach wing players how to properly feed the ball into the post.

Setup

For this next drill, the point guard will start at the top of the arc. We'll also have a shooting guard on the right wing and a power forward on the right block, each with an appropriate defender matched up on them.

Execution

The drill will start with the shooting guard receiving the pass on the wing. The power forward will establish position, present a target for the catch, and receive the pass from the shooting guard. The power forward will secure the ball with a strong grip, holding it up under his chin with both hands.

The shooting guard will then slide down into the corner, ready to either catch and shoot or re-post the power forward if the ball gets kicked back out.

The power forward will then go to work down low, making a move and trying to score one on one. He has the option of kicking the ball back out to the shooting guard and re-establishing position if he loses his dribble or wants to get deeper in the paint before receiving the pass.

Coaching Tips

You can vary the intensity of this drill – begin with mere token defense, and as the players get more comfortable allow the defense to bump up to 75% and eventually go live.

Also, once you start to increase the intensity, give the shooting guard the option of cutting through off the power forward's shoulder to the hoop after the entry pass for the backdoor opportunity.

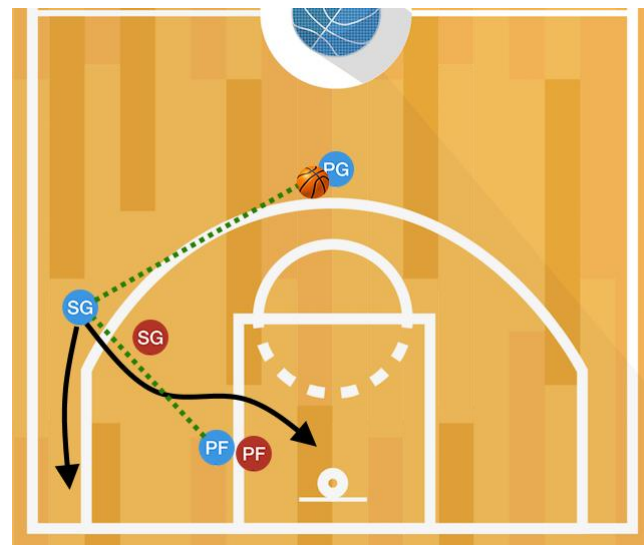


Figure 1: Feed the Post Drill

Give and Go Drill

Purpose

To teach players the basics of how to effectively execute the give and go.

Setup

Have your point guard start at the top of the arc with a ball, and the shooting guard start on the wing, each with a defender matched up in front of them.

Execution

The drill will start with the shooting guard performing a v-cut to get open on the wing, where he will receive the pass from the point guard. The point guard will then take a misdirection step outside before cutting back across his defenders face and making a hard cut straight to the rim. The shooting guard will hit him with a pass, in stride, allowing the point guard to go up and finish with a lay-up.

Coaching Tips

Once the players understand the concept, you can combine this drill with both the flare screen and curl screen drills and allow the offense and defense to go live. They will be put in situations where they need to read the defense and react accordingly – whether that's a flare screen, curl, or the classic give and go.

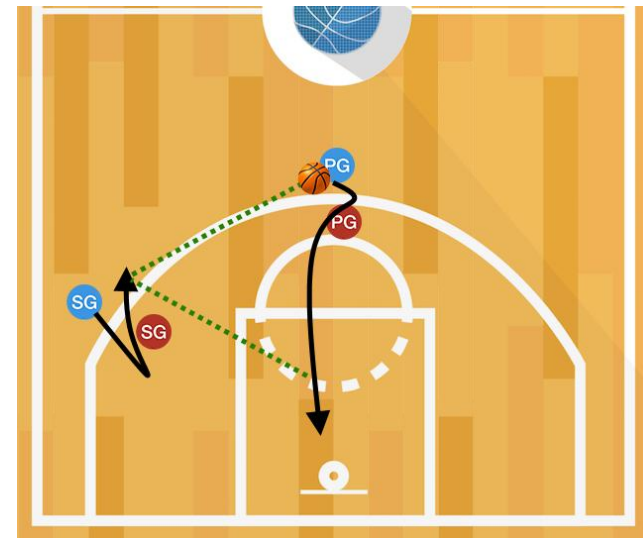


Figure 1: Give and Go Drill

Fundamentals Series

Purpose

To re-inforce the importance of the fundamentals when it comes to dribbling and passing the ball on offense.

Setup

To begin, have your players form two lines where the baseline and lane lines meet – with the first and second player in each line holding a ball. You will also have two players line up on the far side of halfcourt, and two coaches just outside the three point line in front of the two lines on the baseline.

Execution

The drill will start on the coach's command, with both players on the baseline dribbling hard out to the elbow, then performing a crossover and retreat dribble to the outside. After that the ball handlers will explode forward again, perform a hard crossover in front of the coach, and then making a chest pass to their teammates on the other side of halfcourt. They will then take the place of the teammates they just passed too, while those teammates go fill at the back of the ballhandlers' line.

Coaching Tips

At the start, have players focus on a simple crossover and chest pass, but once they've become more comfortable, you can begin to work other dribble moves and passes into the drill: through the legs, behind the back, double crossovers, bounce passes – it's important players get reps doing all these moves on both side of the line, so that there is no chance for any weaknesses to develop in their fundamentals.

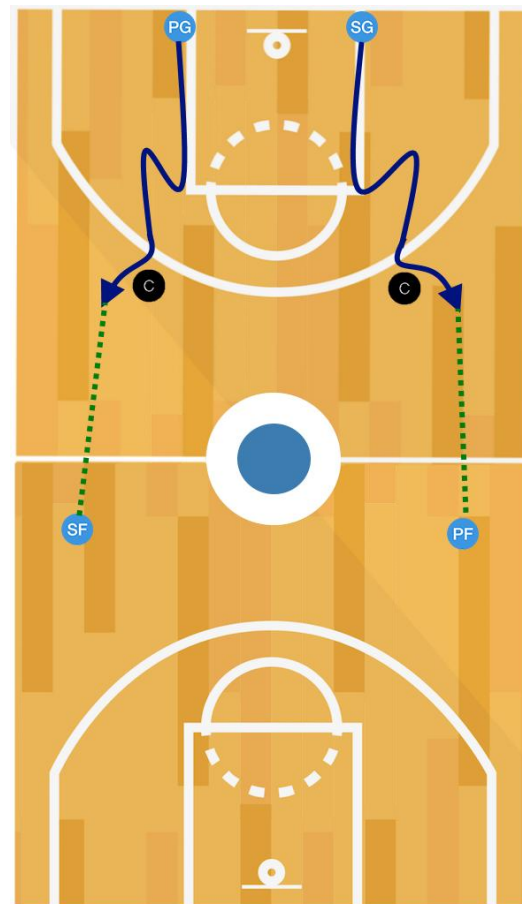


Figure 1: Fundamentals Series

Drive & Kick Drill

Purpose

This next drill helps to further ingrain the principles of the motion offense into your players' minds, teaching them how to move into space and react accordingly to penetration and ball movement.

Setup

This drill will begin with three players out on the court, one at the top of the key with the ball, and one on each wing.

Execution

The player who begins with the ball will drive to the hoop, with the players on the wings sliding appropriately around the arc so as to maintain passing lanes for the ballhandler. The ballhandler will come to a jump stop in the paint, kick a pass out to one of the other wings, and fill out to open space on the arc. The player who receives the pass will then penetrate on the catch and find one of his teammates subsequently. Once the players have driven and kicked three times, they're allowed to take a jumpshot.

Coaching Tips

It's important that your ballhandlers come to a jump stop before making the pass. Young players will often make the mistake of jumping to make the pass, which is a bad habit that you need to nip in the bud. While most of the time it will be fine, if for whatever reason the pass they thought was going to be open is no longer open, they will be stuck in the air, forced to fire off a low percentage pass to avoid the travel, likely leading the possession to end in a turnover.

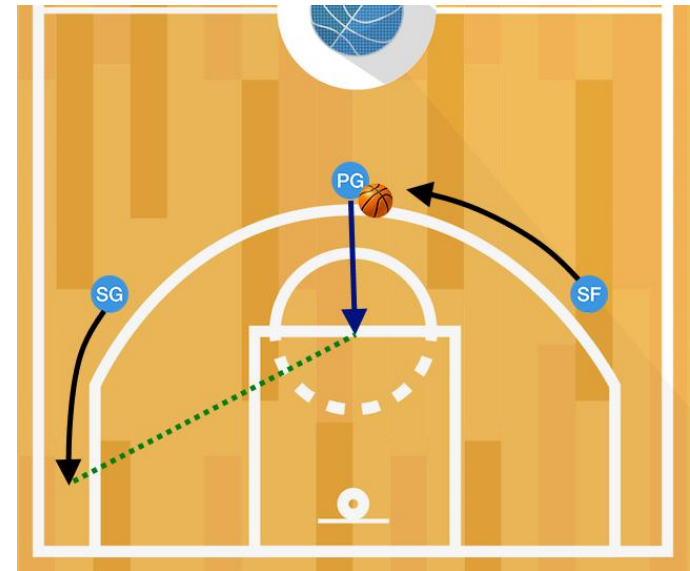


Figure 1: Drive and Kick Drill

2 v 2 Gauntlet Drill

Purpose

To teach players how to play through physicality, and to display the importance of hustling and boxing out.

Setup

This drill will begin with the team forming four liners – two on the baseline just below each box, and two up on the elbows. The players on the elbows play as one team, while the players on the baseline play as another. Also, the coach will start underneath the hoop, holding a basketball.

Execution

The drill will begin with the coach passing the ball to one of the players up on the elbows. Whoever receives the pass will take a jumpshot, while the two players on the baseline come out to box out the team who has just shot. Regardless of the result of the shot, the teams will fight for the rebound and play two on two. First team to score wins, with the winners heading to the baseline and the losers going up to the free throw line.

Coaching Tips

While you don't want to let things get out of hand, you definitely want to call this drill a bit looser than you would others. No touch fouls are getting called – we want to teach players that it can be a war down in those trenches, the referees aren't always going to see everything, and it's up to them to play through it and be as effective as they can.

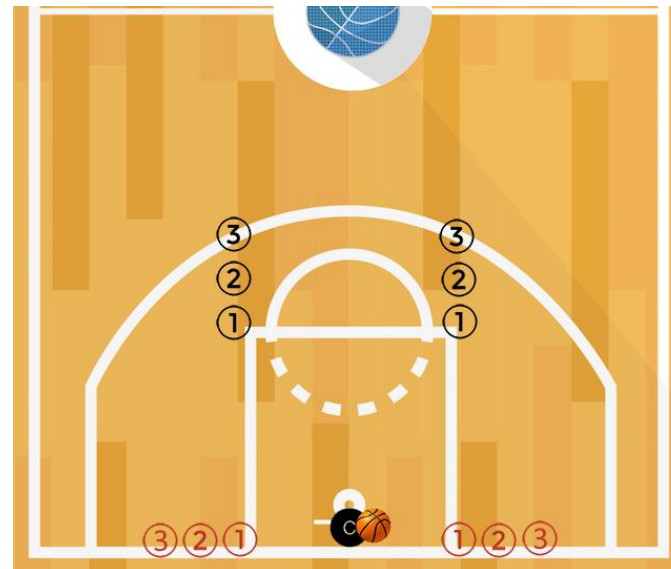


Figure 1: Gauntlet Drill

Motion Offense - Screens Away

Setup

The point guard will start at the top of the arc with the ball, with the shooting guard on the right wing and the small forward on the left wing, the power forward down on the right block, and the center on the left block.

Execution

The point guard will begin by passing to the shooting guard, who will get open using a V-cut, and then heading to the small forward to screen away for him, allowing him to curl to the top of the arc.

At the same time, the power forward will come over and set a cross screen for the center, allowing him to get free and come over and post on the right block. The power forward will then flash to the free throw line.

Options

The first option here is the center, receiving the pass on the low block. If the power forward lays a good screen on his man, this can mean an easy layup, and at the very least strong deep post position.

If that's unavailable, the shooting guard should then look to pass to the power forward at the top of the arc, who will then look to shoot, drive, or make an entry pass to the center.

Lastly, we can hit the small forward at the top of the arc, either for a catch and shoot or to reset the offense.

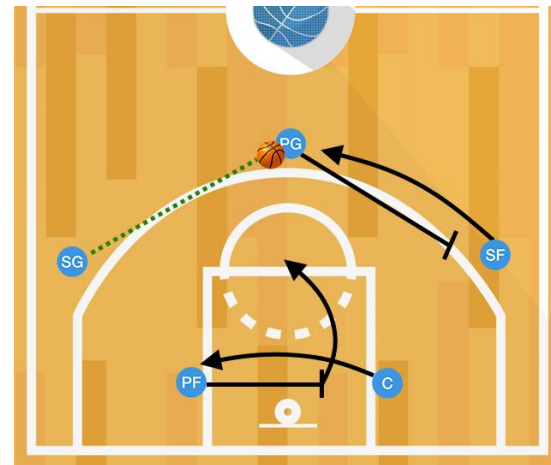


Figure 1: Screens Away

Motion Offense - Curl/Downscreen Combo Action

Setup

The offense will start off with the point guard up top with the ball, the power forward out on the right wing, and the small forward on the left wing. The center will start on the left elbow, and the shooting guard will begin down on the right block.

Execution

The play will begin on the point guard's signal, with both big men heading over to set screens. The power forward will set a down screen for the shooting guard and the center will set a curl screen for the small forward.

Options

The first option is the small forward curling to the hoop, but if the shooting guard is a good shooter and he can get free for a catch and shoot, that's a great look too.

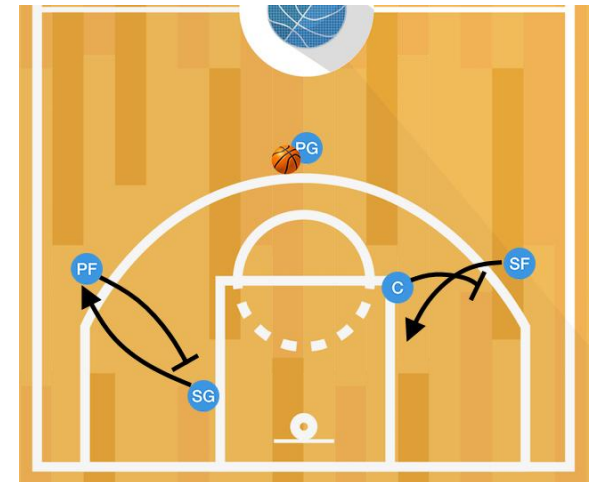


Figure 1: Curl/Downscreen Combo Action

Motion Offense - Give and Go

Setup

The offense will space out in a five out alignment, with the point guard up top, the shooting guard on the right wing, the power forward on the right corner, the small forward on the left wing, and the center, down in the left corner.

Execution

The point guard will start off by hitting the shooting guard with a pass, then making a backdoor cut, looking to receive the pass for a lay up on the give and go. If that isn't there, the small forward will slide up to the top of the arc, with the center replacing him on the left wing and point guard taking his spot down in the left corner.

Options

There's only one option on this play – the give and go. If it isn't there, the shooting guard should look to reset the ball up at the top of the arc.

For more options out of the five out offense, incorporate the Dribble Drive Offense on page 18.

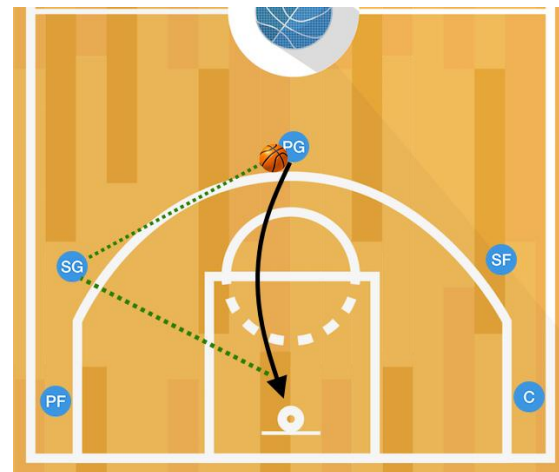


Figure 1: Give and Go Pt. 1

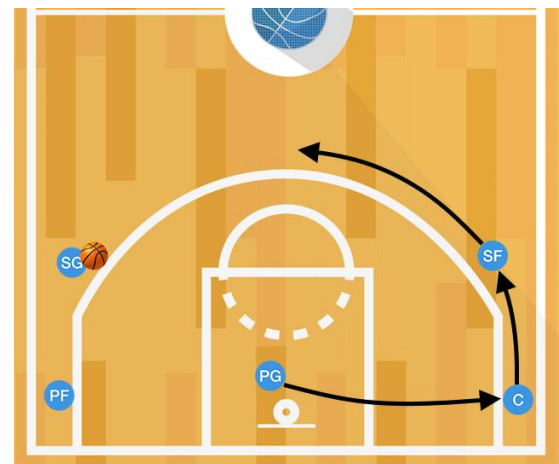


Figure 2: Give and Go Pt. 2

Motion Offense – High Post Option

Setup

The offense will begin in a classic 3-2 setup, with the big men down on the block, the wings out on the wings, and the point guard at the top of the arc with the ball.

Execution

To begin, the point guard will pass the ball to the shooting guard on the wing. At the same time, the center will come over to set a cross screen for the power forward, flashing up to the elbow after. The power forward will continue along the baseline, coming up to set a backscreen for the small forward.

The shooting guard will pass the ball to the center, who will then pivot to face the hoop as the small forward cuts backdoor and the shooting guard flashes to the corner.

Options

Our first option here is the small forward on the backdoor cut, but if the center is left open from the elbow and has that range, he should have the green light to take that shot as well. Otherwise, he should look to see if the shooting guard can catch his man sleeping and get open for three in the corner.

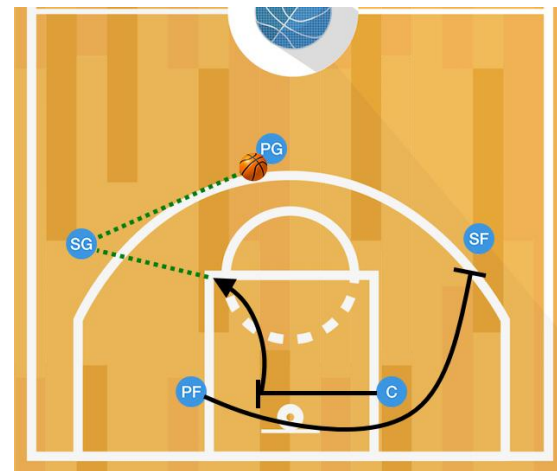


Figure 1: High Post Option Pt. 1

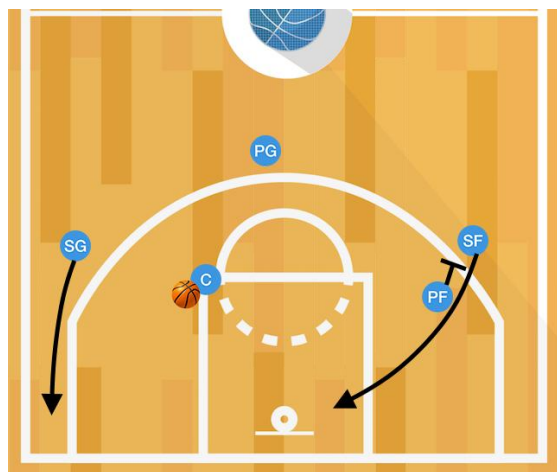


Figure 2: High Post Option Pt. 2

Motion Offense – Wing Ballscreen

Setup

The offense will come out in a 3-2 alignment, with the point guard up top, the wings out wide, and the center and power forward each occupying a block.

Execution

The first pass will be from the point guard to the shooting guard, with the point guard screening away for the shooting guard and then spacing out to the wing, while the shooting guard curls up to the top of the arc. The center will come up to set the inside ball screen, and the power forward will space out into the short corner on the weak side.

Options

Our primary look here is the small forward – center pick and roll action, with the action on the weak side designed to keep the defense occupied and prevent them from loading up on the help side.

As such, the small forward should look to get to the hole, attacking the pick and roll and taking what the defense gives him. If he sees early help from an of the weak side defenders, he can kick out to one of the shooters spotting up and punish the defense with a high percentage catch and shoot.

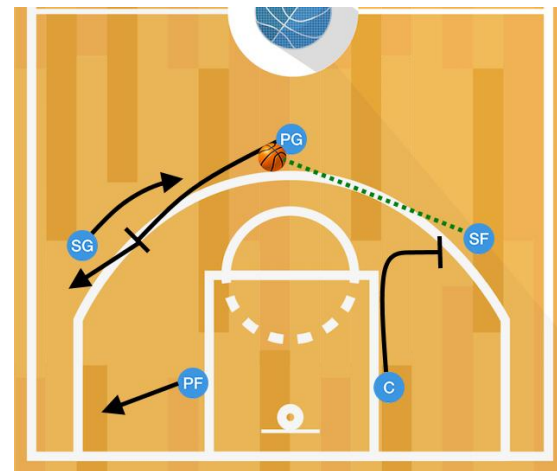


Figure 1: Wing Ball Screen Pt. 1

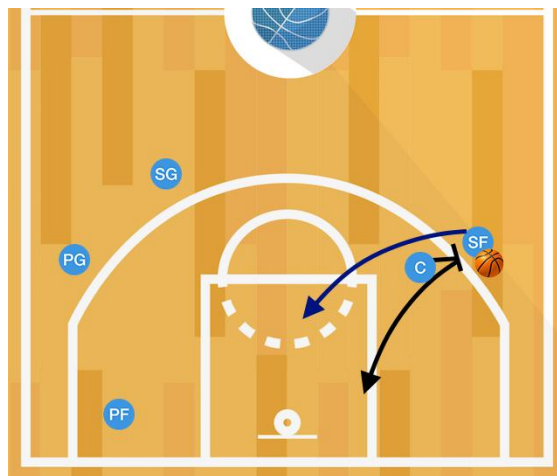


Figure 2: Wing Ball Screen Pt. 2

Motion Offense – Block Stack

Setup

This play begins a little differently – the point guard will still start out at the top of the arc with the ball, but the rest of the offense will be down on the block. The center on the right block with the small forward below him, and the power forward on the left block with the shooting guard just below him.

Execution

The play will begin with both the center and power forward stepping inside to deliver cross screens for the wing on the block opposite them. The small forward and shooting guard will use these cross screens, with the small forward sprinting out to the left wing, and the shooting guard sprinting out to the right wing, where he will receive a pass from the point guard.

After making that pass, the point guard will screen away, setting a pick for the small forward to come fill at the top of the arc. The power forward will come across the court to set a ball screen for the shooting guard, while the center spaces out to the weak side, giving the power forward room to roll after the pick. The shooting guard will use the ball screen and look to attack the middle of the paint.

Options

The shooting guard is in the driver's seat here, and his decision will be based on what the defense gives him. Coming off the pick and roll he should look to attack the hoop until someone steps up to stop him, and look to feed the ball to that defender's man, whether he be the power forward or center's assignment.

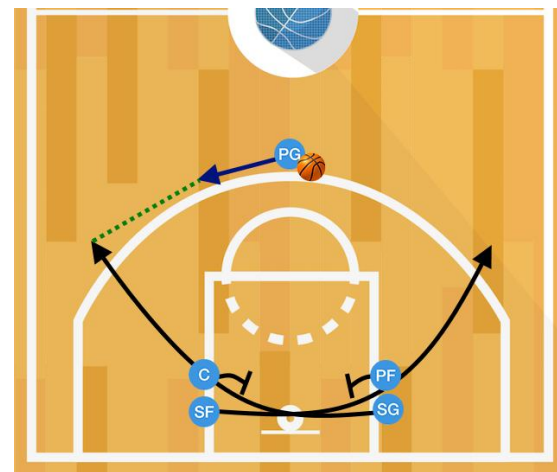


Figure 1: Block Stack Pt. 1

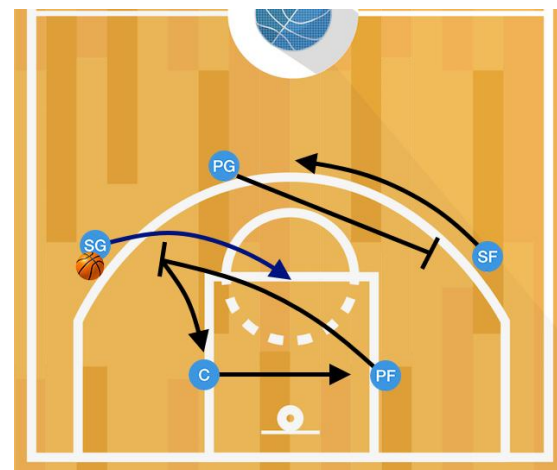


Figure 2: Block Stack Pt. 2

Motion Offense – Dribble Drive Offense

Setup

This next set begins with the offense in a five out alignment, with the point guard at the top of the arc, with small forward and shooting guard on the wings, and the power forward and center in the corners.

Execution

Rather than a set play, this Dribble Drive offense is more of a read and react offense, allowing the players to freestyle more and take what the defense gives them.

There are certain rules though, that basically amount to always moving into space.

For example in Figure 1, when the point guard attacks, the small forward fills in the empty space, and receives a kick out pass. The point guard then spaces out, while the small forward attack the middle of the paint – when he is forced to come to a stop, he passes to the shooting guard, moving up to make himself available as well.

You can also have the power forward and center cut to the hoop on rim attacks, just as long as the players communicate and space out if they don't receive the pass.

Coaching Tips

Since this isn't a set play, there aren't really set options. But one thing to keep in mind is that this is an offense designed for players who are good athletes and good ball handlers – not just at 1-3, but 1-5. This is an offense designed for a team with an abundance of players who have the ability to beat their defenders one on one consistently.

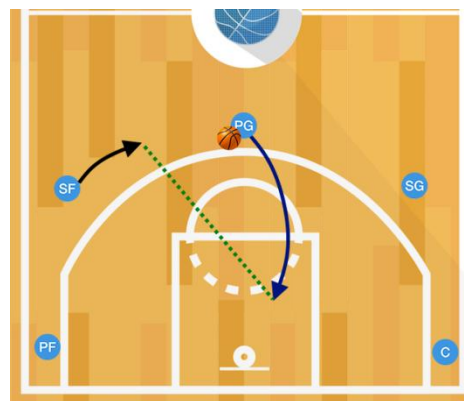


Figure 1: PG Initiating Offense

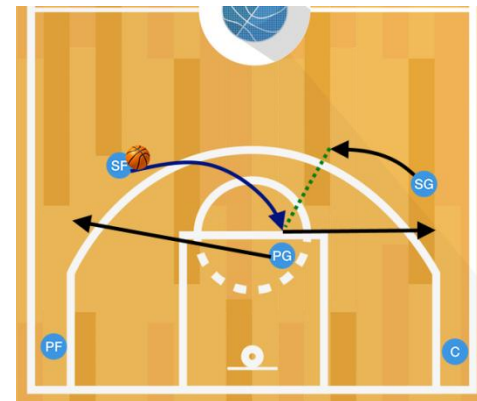


Figure 2: Drive and Kick Cont.

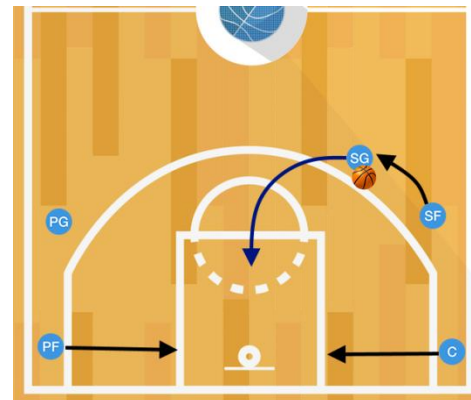


Figure 3: Posts Cut on Rim Attack

Motion Offense – High Low Exchange

Setup

This next play will begin with the shooting guard down in the right corner, the small forward in the left corner, and the power forward on the right block. The center will start at the top of the arc, and the point guard will begin on the right side of the court at about the hash mark.

Execution

The play will begin with a ball screen up high from the center to the point guard. As the center rolls to the hoop, he will roll across the lane, allowing the power forward to come up the lane line up to the arc to make himself available for the reversal pass. The point guard will hit the power forward, who will swing to the shooting guard as he come up to the wing to receive the pass. The power forward will then set another ball screen, this time for the shooting guard. As the shooting guard attacks the middle, the center will set a backscreen for the power forward, allowing him to roll free to the hoop.

Options

There are quite a few options on this play, and while we'll definitely take a layup off the opening pick and roll if we can get it, it is being used more as a setup for the second ball screen. Our primary option here is the power forward, looking to hit him for a wide open layup after the backscreen. If that isn't there, this will likely be because of a sagging, over-helping defense, meaning either the shooting guard himself or the point guard on the wing should be open for the jumpshot.

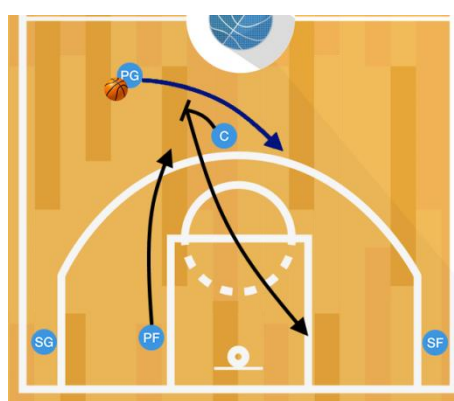


Figure 1: High Ball Screen

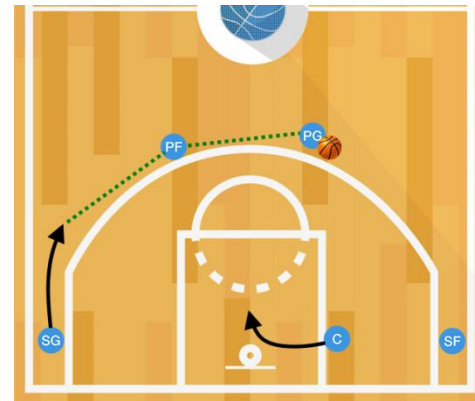


Figure 2: Swing Ball Around Arc

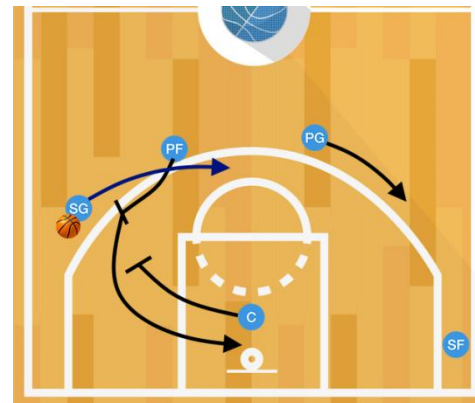


Figure 3: 2nd Ball Screen followed by Big to Big Backscreen

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