

NATIONAL COACHING INSTITUTE

Task 9

Sport-Specific Skill Development: Basketball Post Play

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GENERAL CONCEPTS

As the sport of basketball advances, the post position has become more athletic, more skilled and more sophisticated at an amazing rate. Coaches must identify gaps between where players currently stand and where they should be in order to compete at the elite level.

PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE FACTORS

BALANCE

International post players assume a balanced position so they can attack the basket quickly (Repeša, 2009). The lower body is an important force in the battle for position; players post up on the balls of their feet, bend their knees and keep their core and pillar centered. Since they are ready to explode towards the basket, they can score quickly if the defence provides an opening.

According to Los Angeles Lakers consultant Ettore Messina: “balance is more important than anything else, including speed and quickness.” To move efficiently, a player must maintain balance. Although posts aim to establish good initial position, they also work on regaining their cylinder after it has been lost (Messina, 2008).

AGILITY

International posts retain their agility and quickness. Perhaps due to increased practice on the fundamentals, players of all ages are very skilled with or without the basketball (Bullen, 2011). Able to score in transition, move from one side of the key to another and swiftly change direction, international posts are always on the move. They will use cuts and screens to shift the defence in order to generate scoring chances.

EXPLOSIVENESS

If there is a scoring chance, posts will take it without delay. The players possess the ability to split a double-team or beat the help defender. In traffic, they use their lower body to explode towards the hoop. If there are few passing or shooting openings, posts will decisively attack the basket. For example, it is difficult to pass out of a baseline move so players only attack in that direction when they know they can get to the rim and finish.

SPORT-SPECIFIC SKILLS

BALLHANDLING

Abroad, tall players are basketball players first, post players second. They are able to dribble efficiently and can drive to the basket from the top of the key, the high post or the mid-post. While some are able to string together a sequence of ball moves, most rely on simple strategies like using their body to protect the ball and reading the court.

SHOOTING

Posts are capable of making shots from multiple locations in the half-court, stretching the defence. After setting the high screen, the player may roll to the basket or pop beyond the arc, creating a challenging situation for the defender to read. Since these post players are gifted shooters, they must be closely guarded. As a result, this creates opportunities for cross-steps and drives to the basket or up and under manoeuvres.

Posts must be able to accept downscreens from guards in order to pop into open areas and make Jump shots (Obradović, Half Court Man-to-Man Offense, 2005, p. 20). Due to the longer three-point shooting distance, fewer forwards will step out and attempt an outside shot. Posts in elite international competition need the ability to shoot from the high post, mid-post and short corner to expose the increased spacing (Scariolo, n.d.).

PASSING

Training together since they were juniors, international players share a strong sense of team solidarity. There is less urgency for the individual to score so long as the team creates a high percentage scoring chance. If the posts sense that a defender has doubled-down, they are more than willing to kick the ball out to an open shooter. Sharing the ball tests whether the defence can help and recover. Not only are these post players capable of making a mix of passes, they read the court well and will use misdirection to confuse the defence.

PIVOTING

International players are coached to execute the basics well before expanding their game (Messina, 2008). They pivot before utilizing the dribble - including two-stage pivots, jab-step fakes and pivots in different directions - in order to keep the defence off balance. Once the post players perceive an opening, their balanced position and quick first step allow them to immediately take advantage. Keeping the pivot foot away from the defender provides the post with more options (Pasquali, 2010).

REBOUNDING

The wide international key demands that all interior players box out. The longer arc has decreased shooting percentages so there will be more rebounds. If the defender does not pivot and make contact, they may give up a long rebound or allow an opponent to pass them along the baseline (Scariolo, n.d.).

MENTAL TRAINING

ANTICIPATION

Keeping their heads up and their eyes on the play allows posts to read the play and anticipate. This produces opportunities for the player, such as by sealing a defender before a pass is made, or their teammates, such as passing one step ahead of a cutter so they can catch the ball and

finish in a single motion. Those who have diligently practiced know how the defence will react so their moves are a sequence of logical actions designed to create a positive outcome instead of random and desperate actions.

DECISION-MAKING

International post players are dangerous because they are capable of evaluating countless opportunities. They read how the defence guards them; basic moves become a gateway to diverse options, depending on the situation. They establish position in critical areas of the court, such as the high post and middle of the key which permit high percentage actions.

PREPARATION

Getting good position is not simply arriving at a point on the floor but arriving there ready to score. International posts will fight for position before the ball arrives. Players employ their lower body, including their hips and front foot to get position, rarely using their hands to restrain an opponent (Messina, 2008). When they catch the ball, they have a favourable position so they can shoot or attack the basket immediately.

THE ROLE OF POST PLAYERS IN TEAM OFFENCES

THREATS IN TRANSITION

The post players are involved in the offence early and often. Posts may finish in transition or receive an early entry pass. Even a young post would be expected to contribute to the team by running the floor and making baskets and foul shots in transition. The inverted jump-stop is a technique used to finish under control in transition; in case this opportunity disappears, the pivot foot away from the defender is preserved (Messina, 2008).

MULTIPLE ROLES

International post players establish position early and serve as a primary option (Obradović, 2007, p. 24). Even if they do not receive the ball on the low block, the posts remain active as screeners, passers, and cutters. The players are likely to repeat these actions several times during the series, as opposed to taking one position and remaining there. During a twenty-four second possession, players will fulfill many roles from different locations on the floor.

Good passers multiply the options of the screen and roll because they can catch a pass, pivot and change the rhythm of the play. Very few players are one-dimensional: posting up, screening, passing, shooting and rebounding are part of the same set of responsibilities. Coaches should adapt their systems to suit the strengths of the players.



Nikola Mirotić won the Euroleague Rising Star award due to his quick first step and ability to read the court and make decisions.

Rather than dogmatically insisting on a certain alignment, coaches should emphasize the skills of their players. A gifted 1-on-1 post player causes severe match-up problems for the opposition and should be utilized, especially within the greater spacing afforded by the new International Basketball Federation (F.I.B.A.) rules (Scariolo, n.d.).

DYNAMIC MOVEMENT

Post play is very dynamic. It is expected that the ball moves if no opportunities materialize. All players - including those who work inside - are well-suited to a style that swings the ball in order to open up the defence. The post entry pass is critical to the penetration and ball movement employed by top offences (Obradović, Half Court Man-to-Man Offense, 2005, p. 22).

The post may kick the ball out to a guard and quickly repost. As the ball is passed around the perimeter, the post will continually adjust their position, re-establishing balance and winning the battles of the front feet. When the post rolls to the basket, they monitor the ballhandler and their progress to the basket. High and low posts interchange and flash to the ball immediately after it is received by their partner. Passing lanes remain clear and a variety of passes are available.

PHYSICAL PLAY

International post play is very physical and players must use a combination of size, strength, balance, agility and technique. Wearing down an opposing defender by working constantly to improve position and making forceful moves to the basket forces the defence to help, rotate and switch (Obradović, Half Court Man-to-Man Offense, 2005, p. 20). Each team will attempt to control the matchup inside. Teams that are not as strong can be successful by pulling the post away from the basket and attacking the hoop with speed (Bullen, 2011).

PRESSURING THE DEFENCE

Top European coaches select players who can attack 1-on-1 (Obradović, Half Court Man-to-Man Offense, 2005, p. 19). Posts who have a multi-faceted game place pressure on the defence; within shooting range, they expose lanes to the basket. When defenders come to help protect the basket, shooters, cutters and ballhandlers are open. Awareness and decision-making enable teams to maximize their high percentage scoring chances.

When the defence plays aggressively, the post's ability to pass and shoot opens up chances for teammates, such as backdoor cuts ball reversals. Ripping through and pivoting allow the post to keep the ball away from the defender. Posts are responsible for assisting a player who is denied by setting screens and shifting in order to disrupt the defensive scheme (Obradović, 2007, p. 25).

Around the rectangular key, both posts can play on the low block without interfering with each other. When a defence rotates, it is difficult to help the helper because the extra player has more ground to cover. If there is a double-team in the post, the weak-side post should assume a position to generate an immediate scoring chance (Scariolo, n.d.). Whatever the system, post players are required to read the play, adjust to the movements of the defenders and anticipate what may come next.

SPECIFIC EXAMPLES

Vlade Divac • Explosive Finish



Vlade Divac spins baselines and protects the ball with his body.

Concepts:

- Establish favourable position before the ball arrives
- Plan move ahead of time in order to score quickly

Instructions:



- 1) Win the battle of the front foot (along the baseline) to create a seal
 - a. Catch the ball and attack in the direction of the pass
 - b. Drop-step with the right foot
- 2) Drive along the baseline
 - a. Take a hard left-handed dribble
 - b. Step into the paint with the left foot
- 3) Finish on the other side of the basket
 - a. Cross-step with the right foot
 - b. Spin and finish with a right-handed dunk

→→→ Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GU8mxKRfKRU>

Dirk Nowitzki • Post Jump Shot

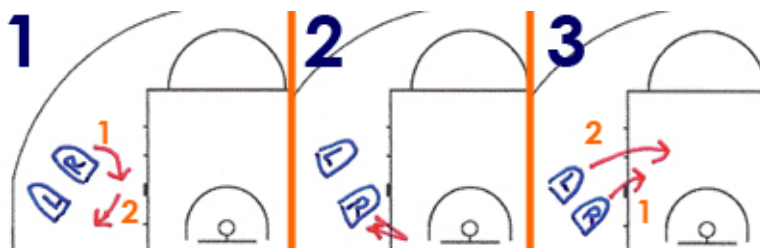


After pivoting to square up, Dirk Nowitzki elevates over the defence.

Concepts:

- Attack the middle of the key
- Use misdirection to confuse defender

Instructions:



- 1) Square up to the basket
 - a. Make a two-stage pivot towards the baseline
 - b. Use the foot away from the defence as a pivot foot
- 2) Jab step towards the basket
 - a. Attack the baseline if a scoring opportunity is available
 - b. A Jump shot is also possible
- 3) Dribble into the key
 - a. Cross-step into the middle
 - b. Take a Jump shot

→→→ Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JeYJgKTU2Wg>

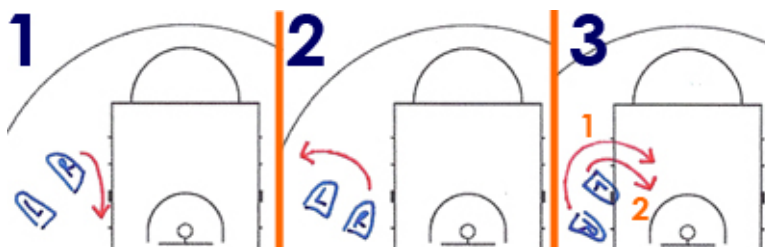
Pau Gasol • Spin into the Middle of the Key

Pau Gasol fakes with his head and shoulder as he scans the court.

Concepts:

- Establish pivot foot away from the defender
- Attack the middle of the key

Instructions:



- 1) Catch the ball outside the key
 - a. Establish the left foot as the pivot foot
 - b. Consider various fakes (jab step, shot-fake, pass-fake) to get the defender off balance
- 2) Move towards the baseline
 - a. Pivot away from the basket with the right foot
 - b. Dribble with the left-hand
- 3) Spin back towards the hoop
 - a. Drop-step first with the right foot
 - b. Finish with a left-handed hook shot

→→→ Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q2zpsQbnR-Q>

Luis Scola • Attack the Basket



Luis Scola dribbles into the middle of the key while reading the play.

Concepts:

- Set screens to create movement
- Scan the court to find open teammates

Instructions:



- 1) Catch the entry pass from the high post
 - a. Step towards the block with the left foot
 - b. Dribble with the right hand
- 2) Spin into the middle of the paint
 - a. Drop-step with the right foot
 - b. Pick up the dribble
- 3) Finish with a lay-up
 - a. Spin with the left foot
 - b. Finish over the right shoulder

→→→ Link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lsm4_ABR_Sc

Dejan Bodiroga • Drive into the Paint

Dejan Bodiroga starts a move outside the paint with a right-handed dribble before cutting back into the paint.

Concepts:

- Cross-step around defender
- String together a sequence of moves to overcome defence

Instructions:



- 1) Start the dribble on the wing or the high post
 - a. Cross-step with the left foot
 - b. Start a right-handed dribble
- 2) Enter the middle of the key
 - a. Cross-over to the left hand
 - b. Cross-step with the right foot
- 3) Finish in the lane
 - a. Square up with the left foot
 - b. Finish with a jumper or a floater

→→→ Link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8W_9R2JnBt8

Sofoklis Schortsanitis • Fake Middle, Finish Baseline

Sofoklis Schortsanitis employs balance, strength and size to keep the defender away from the ball.

Concepts:

- Establish and maintain a balanced position
- Adjust passing angle as the ball moves

Instructions:



- 1) Catch the ball on the low block
 - a. Dribble ball with the right hand
 - b. Regain balance and look to spin towards the basket
- 2) Move into the middle to draw the double-team
 - a. Pick up the dribble and protect the ball with two hands
 - b. Pivot towards the baseline
- 3) Execute a two-stage pivot towards the baseline
 - a. Make a shoulder fake towards the middle
 - b. Finish with a dunk along the baseline

→→→ Link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-P3Ze_l6bl8

Rasho Nesterović • Screen and Roll

Rasho Nesterović uses his non-pivot foot to create room between the ball and the defence.

Concepts:

- Establish favourable position before the ball arrives
- Read the play (teammates and opponents) as it unfolds

Instructions:



- 1) Set the high screen and roll to the basket
 - a. Open up to the ball with the right foot
 - b. Maintain seal of defender with body, not hands
- 2) Move laterally towards the basket
 - a. Read the play; provide room for the ballhandler to drive
 - b. Drop-step with the left foot as the pass arrives
- 3) Finish with the right hand
 - a. Pivot on the left foot
 - b. Protect the ball with the body

→→→ Link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogh_eK67q8w

Ante Tomić • Beat the Double-Team

Ante Tomić protects the ball from the weak-side defender as he attempts a hook shot.

Concepts:

- Assume different roles and moving constantly
- Attack the basket when the double-team is attempted

Instructions:

- 1) Run “Flex” offence
 - a. Set a downscreen and read play
 - b. Establish weak-side position
- 2) Read the play and step into the paint
 - a. Seal the helper with the right foot
 - b. Assume a balanced position, reading the play
- 3) Catch and finish strong
 - a. Protect the ball and keep it high
 - b. Pivot and shoot a right-handed hook shot

➡➡➡ Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M1iE4qVyR74>

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Teaching Post Play

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PHILOSOPHY

“The four laws of learning are explanation, demonstration, imitation, and repetition. The goal is to create a correct habit that can be produced instinctively under great pressure. To make sure this goal was achieved, I created eight laws of learning: namely, explanation, demonstration, imitation, repetition, repetition, repetition, repetition and repetition.”

- John Wooden (Wooden, 2009)

This section will focus on the offensive aspect of post play. In order to get on the court and succeed, players require balance, footwork and fundamental skills. Mastering these basics necessitates daily practice throughout the year (Newell & Nater, 2008, pp. 55-56). During the course of developing these physical, technical and mental abilities, players will learn to defend, screen and rebound as they push each other to get better in games and practices.

EXPLANATION

PLAYER ENGAGEMENT

SIGNIFICANCE

Mastery-oriented goals and intrinsic motivation are strongly connected. If student-athletes perceive the skill as relevant to their future goals, intrinsic motivation increases. When coaches-teachers provide the rationale for mastering a skill, they should emphasize its value, indicating how it will reach intrinsic goals (Lee, McInerney, Liem, & Ortega, 2010, p. 275).

An adolescent's sense of time and future does not appear until they are fifteen or sixteen years old (Hume, 2011, p. 56). They may have trouble visualizing an improvement plan that is stretched over several months. In the meantime, they require goals which are more immediate, such as the enjoyment of the activity or a relevant application of their skills.

Mastery-oriented goals are demanding for all stakeholders because they demand consistent effort over the long-term. It is imperative to break the large task into smaller, manageable components. This offers a chance for more feedback and a greater sense of accomplishment when achieving small manageable goals (Burton & Naylor, 2002, p. 473).

MOTIVATION

Left to their own devices, people remain unfocused. Mastery-oriented goals channel effort and concentration towards the process of performing a skill correctly. Those who set explicit goals outperform those who do not set any and those who set qualitative objectives comparing themselves against previous efforts are likely to do better than those who only focus on quantitative benchmarks (Bandura & Cervone, 1983, p. 1025). Improving footwork and shooting percentage while practising a “Sikma” move

Athletes participate in athletics because of skill mastery, fun, social connections, self-esteem, and personal fitness (Von Meter, 2004, p. 17). Eighty percent of the millions involved in youth sport worldwide drop out by age seventeen. Praising the effort of young people will increase the enjoyment of the activity (Hume, 2011, p. 58), especially when they are performing repetitive sport-specific drills, which can become somewhat uninteresting without immediate feedback.

When a high importance is placed on ego, there is less enjoyment. Mastery-oriented goals promote enjoyment (Cresswell, Hodge, & Kidman, 2003, pp. 16-17). Those who pursue mastery goals are more likely to select challenging tasks, persist in the face of difficulty, make use of more sophisticated preparation strategies and retain a more positive attitude (Barron & Harackiewicz, 2001, p. 706). Encourage a routine of self-directed trial and error within a climate of hard fun. If capacity exceeds the challenge, human beings are bored (Hume, 2011, p. 121).

A mastery-oriented approach also suits adolescents who are diagnosed with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (A.D.H.D.) who are prone to set failure avoidance goals. Mastery-oriented goals encourage youth to take control of their development and become more accountable (Barron, Evans, Baranik, Serpell, & Buvinger, 2006, pp. 154-155).

Goals should be adapted to individual needs and serve personal interests (Hume, 2011, p. 55). Learning to play the post provides tall players new to the game with early success or wing players with increased scoring opportunities. Players who experience anxiety in game situations may want to practice post moves so they are more comfortable when they take the court.

TEACHING STYLE

Adolescents have many diverse interests, short attention spans and a desire to interact frequently with their friends so instructions should be short and succinct. Briefly introducing the whole concept and its importance in a 5-on-5 setting contextualizes the activity. Multiple part-method drills provide successful repetitions while building skill and confidence. Ideas should evolve from simple to complex in a logical order. Consolidating all that was learned in a competitive situation challenges athletes to push themselves further (Wooden, 2009).

Whole-Part-Whole teaching also assists coaches by providing the perspective to use backwards-design in their planning. Knowing the ultimate goal and the current level of the athletes influences the format that the purposeful practice will assume (Hume, 2011, p. 162). Another way to look at this teaching style is to think Why?-How?-Why? (Newell & Nater, 2008, p. 193).

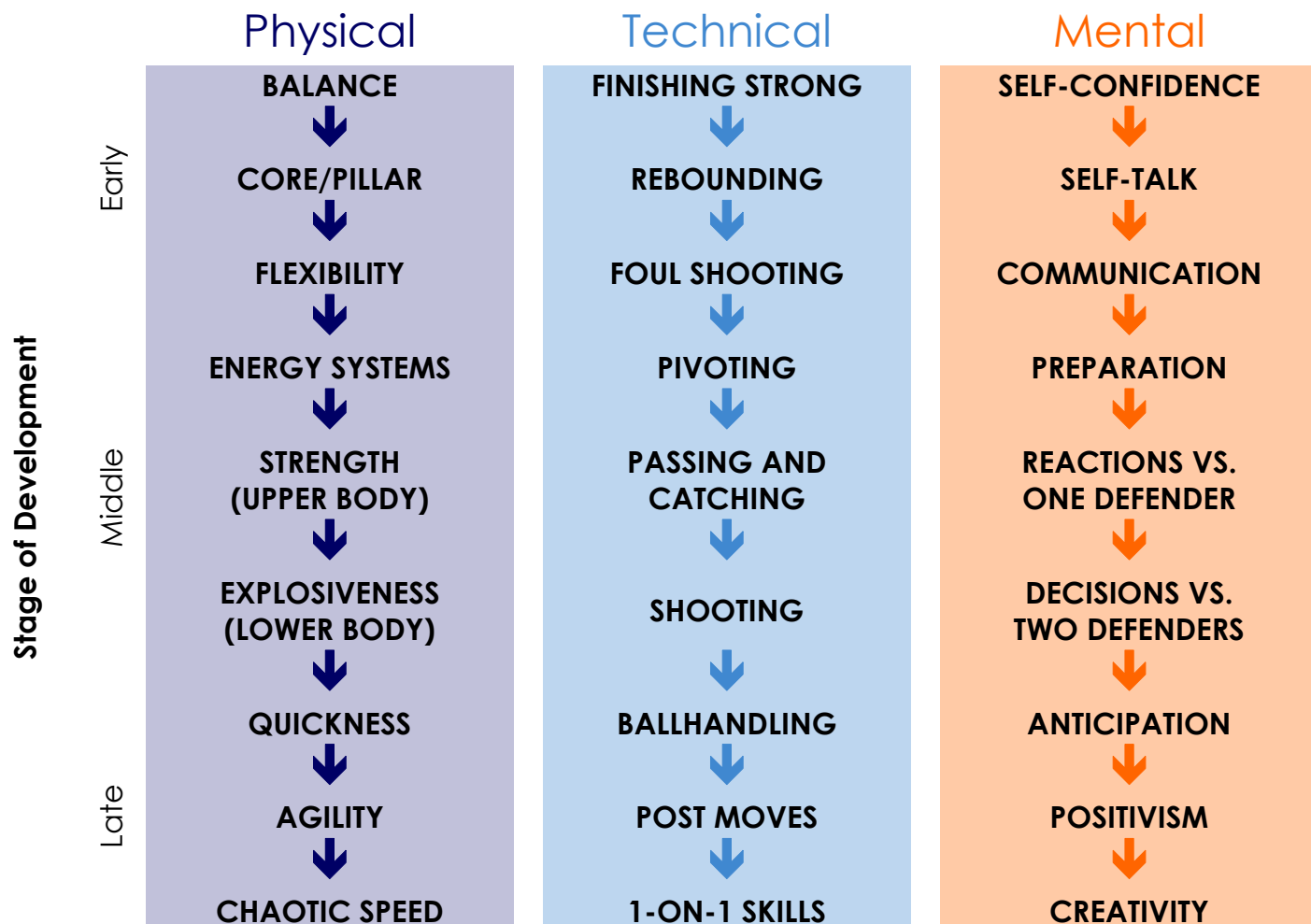
LONG-TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT

There are three directions that a player can develop: physical, technical and mental. Improvement in one field can assist development in another (greater balance leads to better shooting, greater focus leads to better offensive rebounding). A player cannot get too out of sync among the three fields (Messina, 2008).

The Train to Train stage coincides with Peak Height Velocity and the Adolescent Growth Spurt. Physical Performance Factors include balance, energy systems, speed and an introduction to

strength training (Cardinal, Niedre, MacKay, & Balyi, 2011). Players can use explosiveness, flexibility and speed to combat an opponent who is taller but less skilled. Sofoklis Schortsanitis is effective as much because of his agile feet as his dynamic strength (Schortsanitis, 2010).

SAMPLE BREAKDOWN OF POST PLAY TEACHING POINTS



Objectives for a young post player should focus on finishing in transition, rebounding and making foul shots to build confidence (Messina, 2008). Allowing players to focus on simple skills that they can well is one of the most efficient methods to incorporate new additions into a successful squad immediately (Vujošević, 2010). Beginning with basic footwork such as an inverted jump stop or attacking the front foot, coaches guide players, one step at a time.

FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS

The goal of an effective offence is to attempt high percentage shots; what is a sensible decision for one player may not be the same for another. Each player needs to understand what is a good shot for them and coaches can help post players recognize this by teaching moves according to the skill level (Scariolo, n.d.).

BASIC POST MOVES

1) Inverted Jump-Stop

The inverted jump-stop can be used in transition, after rebounds and while flashing to the ball. The post player can quickly gain their balance and finish under control. Due to its usefulness in the full-court game - which is the primary format of the youth game - it is an important skill for all young players (Pasquali, Coach Youth Basketball, v. 1.0, 2010, pp. 13-14). When post players finish strong, their confidence soars (Messina, 2008).

As the game becomes more advanced, screens (on and off the ball) are introduced. Rolling to the basket is one of the best methods for a post player to score easily (Krzyszewski, 2009) or collect an offensive rebound. After the post rolls to the hoop, they can execute an inverted jump stop to finish under control, step around the help defender or grab the offensive board during the defensive rotation and finish.

Instructions:

Remaining balanced, players land first on their outside foot followed by the inside one. The pivot foot is away from the defence so the offensive player cut off the defence and finish. Keep the ball high and focus on finishing. Either a one or two-foot jump can be used, depending on the position of the defence; a power lay-up can be used to finish strong in traffic.



- 1) Transition Catch: Land on the right foot, then the left, and shoot a right-handed lay-up.
- 2) Offensive Rebound: Land on the left foot, then the right, and shoot a left-handed lay-up.
- 3) Weak-Side Flash: Land on the left foot, then the right, and shoot a left-handed lay-up.

Sample Move:

In transition, Jan Veselý lands with his outside (right) foot before planting his inside (left) foot to seal the defence and finish strong. Veselý has progressed from a rookie at Partizan Belgrade to the F.I.B.A. Europe Young Men's Player of the Year to the sixth pick in the 2011 National Basketball Association (N.B.A.) Draft prospect by focusing on the basics first and later expanding his game (Vesely, 2009).

→→→ Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJ4zcOJvr20>

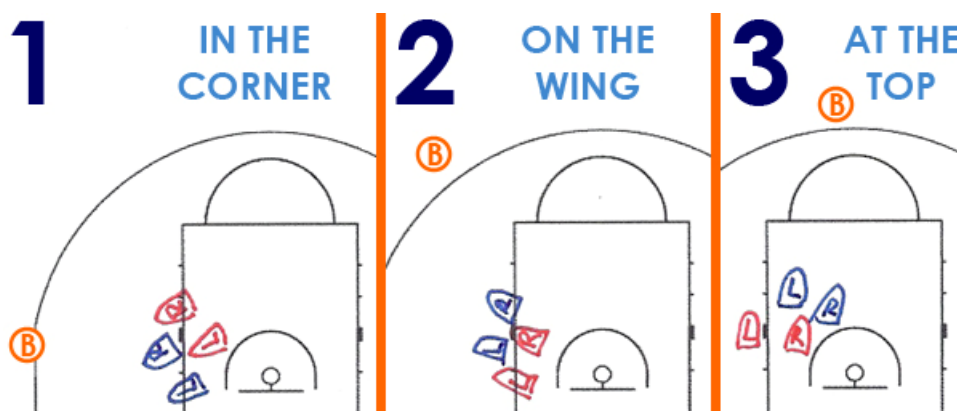
2) Seal the Front Foot

Inside, it is a constant battle for advantageous positions which offer high percentage scoring chances and good passing angles. Playing elbow to elbow, posts should use their lower bodies to seal the opponent. The foot closest to the ball should always be in front of the defender (Messina, 2008). Anticipating how the ball will move (pass or dribble), post players should move their feet so that they maintain the front foot seal.

Instructions:

A post player who is properly balanced stands on the balls of their feet, keep their knees bent and straightens their backs. Weight should be distributed evenly along a line that passes from the feet through the hips to the head. To properly catch the ball, players should create space with both elbows and present a target with two hands at chest height.

After grasping the concept of stationary balance (assuming a position that is difficult to dislodge), players should develop dynamic balance (maintaining balance while moving and regaining their cylinder after momentarily losing it) (Newell & Nater, 2008, pp. 10-13).



- 1) In the Corner: The front foot is the left foot. Players should look for a quick scoring move to the baseline.
- 2) On the Wing: The front foot is the right foot. Players can attack the middle of the key and read the collapsing defence.
- 3) At the Top: The front foot is the right foot. Players should look for a quick scoring move to the middle, over the right shoulder.

Sample Move:

The ball is in the high post so Fran Vazquez assures that his front (left) foot seals the defence, maintaining the passing lane and enabling the easy dunk after the catch. He executes a quick 90° pivot to square up, balances himself and scores. Before the catch, Vazquez is continually moving to pressure the defence and avoid a three-second violation.

→→→ Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKzvQjndNB0>

3) Drop-Step

The drop-step is an explosive scoring move that relies upon the offence's one second advantage in the half-court to generate high percentage scoring chances inside the key. High school posts should use the drop-step as a quick move, securing position before the ball arrives, attacking in the direction of the pass and using the shoulders to keep the ball away from the defence.

It is important that young posts provide a good two-handed target at chest height. Use the elbows to protect the ball; do not reach towards the passer. Posts should begin their flash to the ball before the pass is thrown; otherwise there is insufficient time to attain optimal position during the brief moment that the ball is in the air.

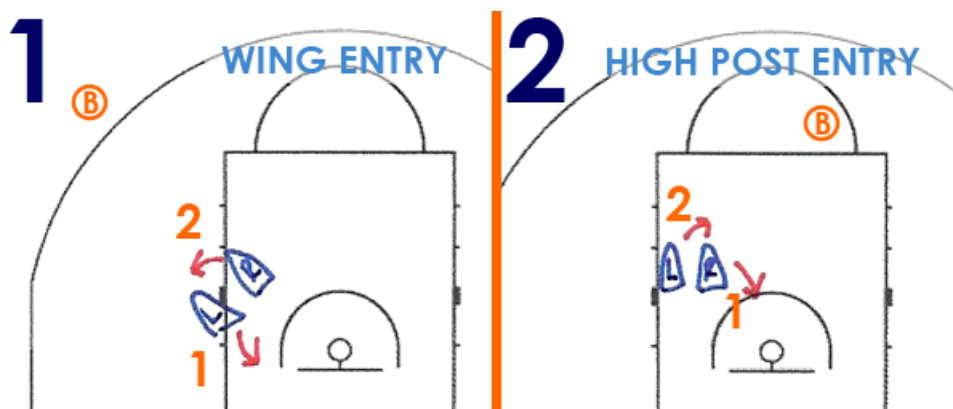
Seal the defence and protect the passing lane, by taking two strong steps towards the ball. This also encourages the player to land with a two-foot jump-stop so that both feet are available to pivot. Players must be able to drop-step equally well with either foot (Lambert, 2009). Coaches should emphasize that players practice the move without a dribble (often taken out of habit or for rhythm) and save the bounce for when they must change their pivot foot. Instead, players should hold the ball securely at chest height.

As the post player is executing the drop-step, they should read the defence. Options include:

- a pump fake to get a defender off-balance and create more room;
- a dribble and a spin in the opposite direction;
- a two-stage pivot to upset the timing of the defence;
- a power dribble, a two-foot jump stop and a power lay-up; and
- a step-back jump shot off the dribble.

Instructions:

The post player establishes a position in the block one step away from the spot where they would attempt a lay-up. The post seals the defence and gives a target with two hands on the side they wish to attack. After catching the ball, the player takes a big step with their non-pivot foot, keeps the ball high and away from the defence and finishes with the outside hand.



- 1) Wing Entry: the post catches the ball on the left side of the body. The right foot is the pivot foot. Drop-step with the left foot and finish with a right-handed lay-up.

- 2) High Post Entry: The quick pass is thrown on the basket side. The left foot is the pivot foot. Drop-step with the left foot and finish with a left-handed lay-up.

Sample Move:

Ksistof Lavrinovic accepts a pass from the high post, drop-steps with his left foot to cut off the defender and finishes with a right-handed lay-up. The drop-step is often incorrectly combined with several dribbles that slow the game down and allow the defence to catch up. Lavrinonic has good size but he realizes that he has an advantage so he drop-steps baseline immediately after catching and scores.

→→→ Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mtDYU0h311Q>

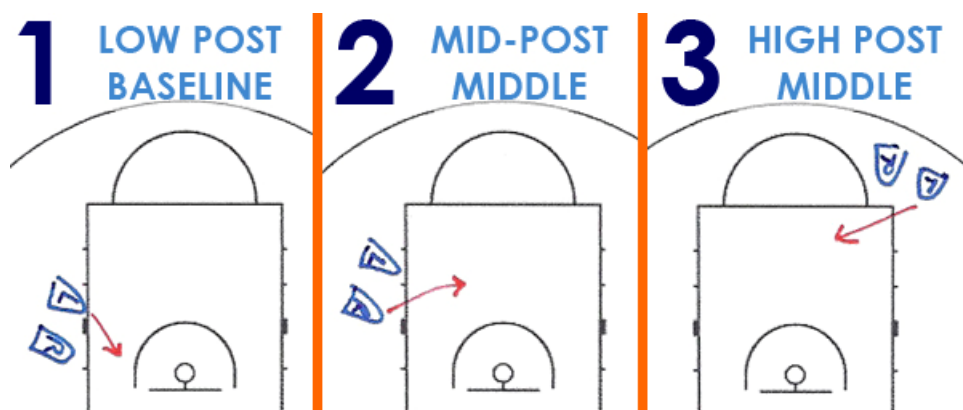
INTERMEDIATE POST MOVES

4) Cross-Step

After squaring up to the basket, a cross-step is used to quickly attack the basket. The offensive player steps across the defender and seals them with their hip and lower body. The cross-step can work in the low post, the mid-post or the high post (Newell & Nater, 2008, pp. 72-3). Tighter hand-check rules prevent the defence from holding up the attacking player.

Instructions:

Great footwork makes a player seem explosive and agile. Often, the player must pivot to square up to the basket. It is important to keep a solid grip on the ball while ripping through. Forming a wedge with both hands and the ball near the hip that is farthest away from the defence protects the basketball. Keep the head up to read the defensive rotation and prepare to move the ball to an open teammate. The counter to a swift cross-step is a hard jab-step followed by a jump shot.



- 1) Low Post Baseline: The post pivots on the right foot and cross-steps with the left, looking to score on the baseline side.
- 2) Mid-Post Middle: The post pivots on the left foot and cross-steps with the right, looking to drive into the middle and pressure the defence.
- 3) High Post Middle: The post pivots on the right foot and cross-steps with the left, looking to drive into the middle and finish with the right hand.

Sample Move:

Tim Duncan catches the ball in the high post and cross-steps into the lane with his right foot and finishes with a right-handed dunk. The quickness of his first step catches the defender off-guard and enables Duncan to find a gap in the paint and dunk the basketball.

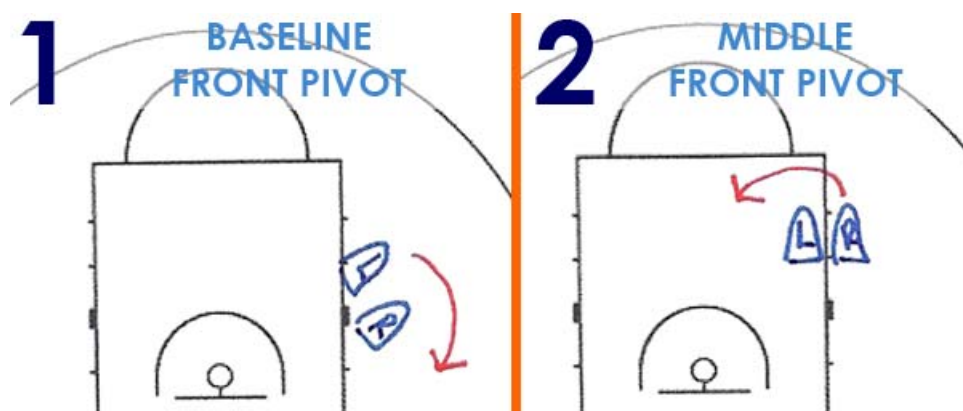
→→→ Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i2Es6dJi2o0>

5) Wheel Move

To obtain the space necessary to beat the defence, the post player must learn to get open effectively. Manoeuvres to get open include starting and stopping, changing direction (along 45° angles), and feints. A quick front pivot can create open shots if the opponent is not playing tightly. Catch the ball with a two-foot stop so both directions are options. A tall player can use this move to score several power lay-ups and gain confidence (Newell & Nater, 2008, p. 33).

Instructions:

Catch the ball and execute a front pivot. The defence may move up and take space away so the post player must be ready to score immediately. Primary options are a Jump shot or a power lay-up. Secondary options include more pivots and ball fakes.



- 1) Baseline Front Pivot: The right foot is the pivot foot so the post steps towards the baseline with the left and looks to score quickly.
- 2) Middle Front Pivot: The left foot is the pivot foot so the post steps towards the middle with the right and looks for a shot or drive.

Sample Move:

Kevin Garnett dribbles into the middle and drop-steps towards the baseline with his right foot. He brings his left foot around and makes a jumper. Garnett employs the Wheel Move regularly so he is able to make the shot directly or using the backboard.

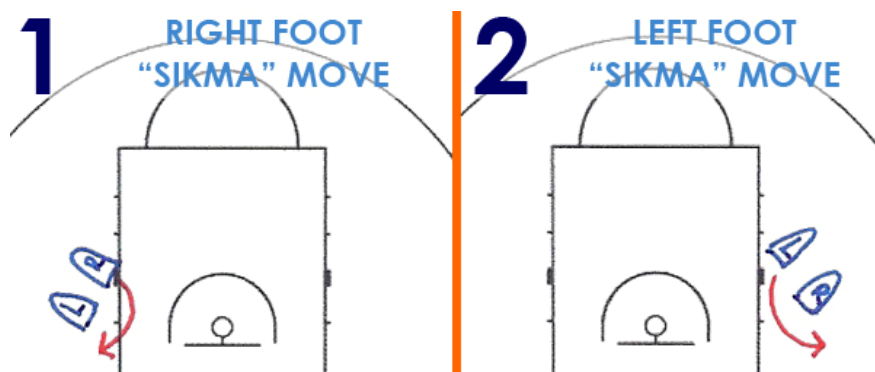
→→→ Link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_66Xni4t-4

6) Reverse Pivot (“Sikma” Move)

Jack Sikma was a small center who used a reverse pivot towards the baseline in order to release a short jumper. The move worked because of its speed and an effective counter which included a shot-fake, cross-step and a hook shot (Newell & Nater, 2008, p. 103). Big men can also use the reverse pivot to create room for their shot.

Instructions:

Pivot to one side - usually towards the baseline - and square up for Jump shot. Keep the ball high and protect it with the elbows. Use the gap that has been created between the offence and the defence to take the shot quickly. Shooters can use the glass if they desire.



- 1) Right Foot “Sikma” Move: The left foot is the pivot foot. Rip through towards the baseline with the right foot.
- 2) Left Foot “Sikma” Move: The right foot is the pivot foot. Rip through towards the baseline with the left foot.

Sample Move:

Arvydas Sabonis pivots towards the baseline with his right foot and makes the quick jump shot. Sabonis would also use the reverse pivot to square up and make use of his passing abilities.

→→→ Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QNex6zw85VU>

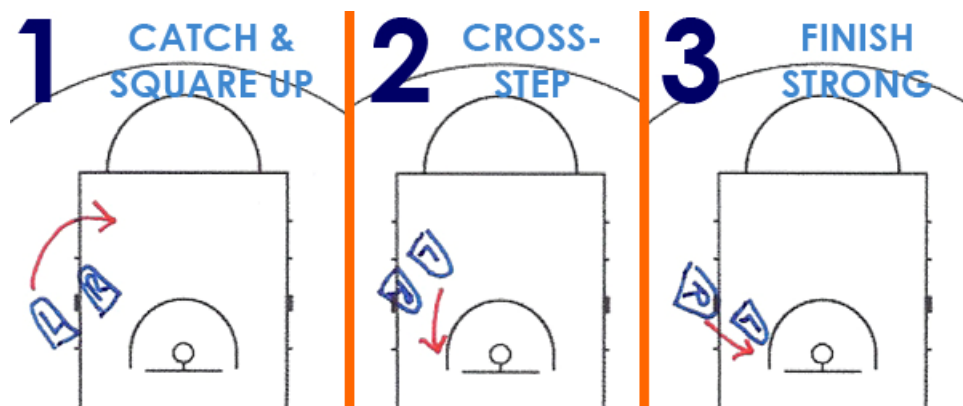
ADVANCED POST MOVES

7) Up and Under (“McHale” Move)

The up and under counters basic pivots. When the post is cut off while attempting to score, they stop their movement and go around the defence. The move works on both middle and baseline drives, even if there is little room to operate. Known as a “McHale” Move, it is best used by forwards, wings and posts mature enough to scan the court, anticipate and make decisions.

Instructions:

Pivot into the lane, preparing to shoot. Pick up the dribble (if required), fake a shot and cross-step around the opponent. The move is not a travel so long as the shot is released before the pivot foot lands (Newell & Nater, 2008, pp. 102-103).



- 1) Catch & Square Up: Use a front pivot to face up to the basket. The right foot is now the pivot foot.
- 2) Cross-Step: Use a head and shoulders fake to get the defender into the air before cross-stepping around them.
- 3) Finish Strong: Release the right-handed lay-up before the pivot (right) foot hits the ground. Protect the shot with the off-arm.

Sample Move:

Kevin McHale pivots to the middle with his right foot and executes a shot-fake. He then cross-steps around the defender - who has become off-balanced - and finishes with the right hand. McHale often utilized several pump-fakes if necessary. The Boston Celtic forward thrived instead so much that his name is associated with that move (and good footwork in general).

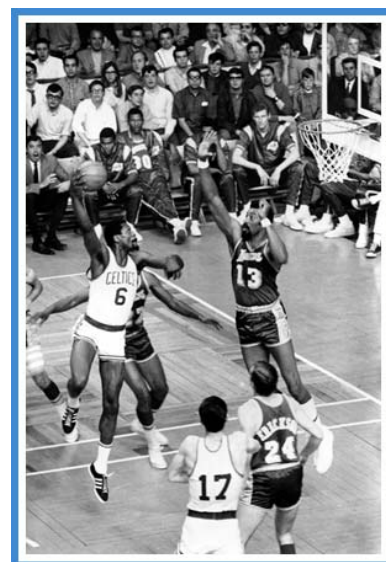
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8) Hook Shot

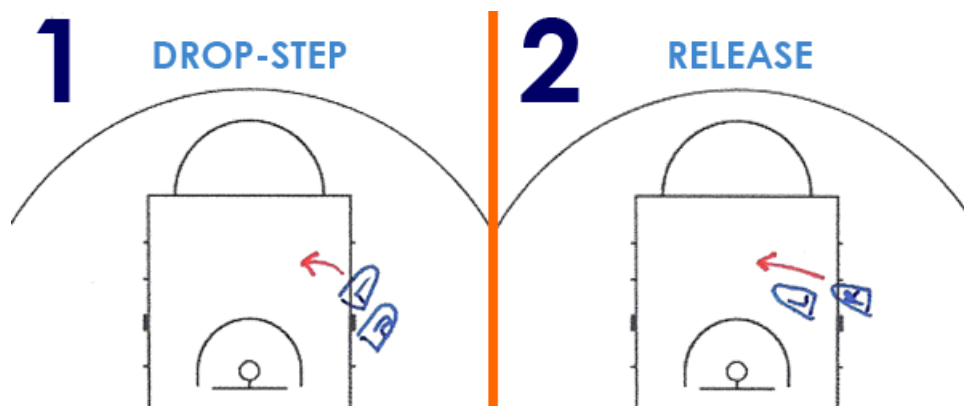
The hook shot is a multi-faceted move which can be taken on the move or from a stationary position. Although its popularity is on the wane, it is still an effective shot at the international level (Papadopoulos, 2007). Many variations exist: a Baby Hook taken close to the basket, the Sky Hook involving little or no dribbling and simple footwork, Magic Johnson's "Junior" Sky Hook was taken on the move as he dribbled towards the middle of the lane. Ambidextrous players are very dangerous because they can release the shot in either direction.

Instructions:

The athlete can jump off both feet like Shaquille O'Neal or use a single foot as Kareem Abdul-Jabbar once did. Use the foot closest to the defence to pivot and release the ball high above the head at the peak of one's reach and use the shoulders to create separation between the defender and the shot ball.



Bill Russell practiced moves like a hook shot persistently while attending McClymonds High School and the University of San Francisco, refining his athleticism into basketball success.



- 1) Drop-Step: Drop-step around the defender to the middle. The right foot is the pivot foot.
- 2) Release: Jump off the left foot and release the hook shot at the peak of the jump.

Sample Move:

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar utilized many Sky Hook variations (off the dribble, after the catch). He pivots on the inside foot and shoots a Sky Hook with the opposite hand.

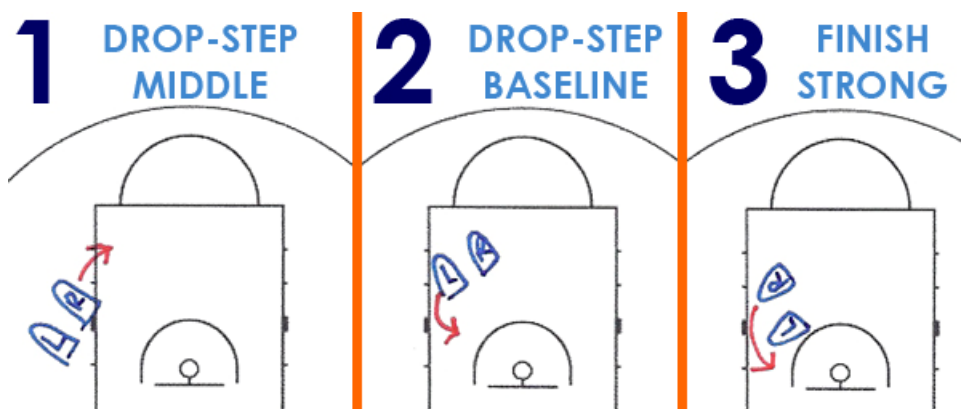
→→→ Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFKkEDHnTbk>

9) Spin Move

Another counter move employed if the defence is off-balance (either an individual who has improperly shifted their weight or a team that is overplaying in one particular direction), the spin features many options. It is important to conserve the dribble until it is absolutely necessary so it can be used to as part of a change in direction.

Instructions:

In a stationary situation, the post player senses that the defender is overplaying on one side (usually the high side), stays low and pivots in the opposite direction (Newell & Nater, 2008, p. 24). On the move, the post player attacks in one direction, reads the defence and executes a reverse pivot. The body protects the ball as the player crosses over and attacks the opposite side of the basket. After spinning, players must regain their balance in order to finish strong.



- 1) Drop-Step Middle: The left foot has become the pivot foot.
- 2) Drop-Step Baseline: It is necessary to dribble to change the pivot foot. Cut the defence off with a left drop-step.
- 3) Finish Strong: Finish the spin with a right-handed lay-up.

Sample Move:

Hakeem Olajuwon dribbles with his right hand and feigns a move towards the middle. He spins towards the baseline (right foot, followed by the left) and dunks. Olajuwon was known for his skilled pivoting and a devastating move known as the “Dream Shake.” Other N.B.A. players occasionally contact him for advice on improving their game.

→→→ Link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5gRQeifc6_8

SKILL MASTERY

After players have learned the fundamentals that best match their Zone of Proximal Development, they can begin stringing different moves together to create new combinations. This presents a new look, making the player harder to guard. Post players must have their own “Go To” moves that they can rely upon but they also need counters that they can attempt when the defence prevents the primary option.

Joel Anthony has progressed from undrafted prospect to starter for the N.B.A. Finalists and Team Canada by slowly developing his game. Anthony complemented his shot-blocking defence with a hook shot, a fifteen-foot jump shot and superior hands and footwork. The Miami Heat coaching staff compliment him on his journey from raw talent to key contributor while Leo Rautins relies on him to play significant minutes for the national team (Feschuk, 2011).



Joel Anthony makes open jump shots when teammates penetrate and kick the ball.

Players need to understand why they are practicing a “Go To” move or counter. It is easy to say that a Wheel Move works because it is quick and explosive but it takes more to explain that a “Rocker Step” (jab-step, shot-fake, drive) is used to draw the defence in, providing a chance to cross-step and drive (Newell & Nater, 2008, p. 194). Combine the reasoning into chunks of information so it can be accessed faster than a long sequence (Hume, 2011, p. 218). A physical demonstration may be required to show a player why and how their practice will pay off

DEMONSTRATION

PRACTICE PLANNING

An effective and enjoyable workout should include elements from the physical, technical, and mental domains, drawn from approximately the same stage of development.

Winning the Battle of the Front Foot

Practice Plan:

- a. Fundamentals: Win Battle of Front Foot
- b. 1-on-0: Seal and Finish Strong
- c. 1-on-1 with Advantage: Seal in Post with Two Passers
 - i. Maintain Position
 - ii. Anticipate
 - iii. Option to Repost
- d. Decision-Making: Offensive Rebounding Drill
 - i. Score Quickly; or
 - ii. Kick the Ball to a Shooter

Observations:

The players did not exemplify ideal habits at the beginning of the drill, using an unnecessary dribble or giving up space. Most verbal cues focused on establishing a strong position and scoring quickly. When the defence was put in place, players were encouraged to use their speed instead of their strength. Better perimeter passing would have improved the offensive component of the drill as passers were “making love with their eyes” and defenders were reading this (Messina, 2008).

To create a different situation, an offensive rebounding drill was utilized; if the players felt that they could not finish, they were to pass the ball to an open shooter. Players were also given the opportunity to repost (reestablish their seal inside).

One player needed to work on his posture: although he possessed long limbs, he was very lethargic and rarely balanced. He gave up size by bending forwards and space by allowing the defender to push him away from the low post (into the mid-post or the short corner). We spoke after the drills and I suggested that post play was an opportunity to increase his minutes and touches. His athletic could lead to high percentage shots but he needed to improve his balance and tenacity inside.

YouTube Clips:

- ➔ **Part I:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I3-sRTlph1U>
- ➔ **Part II:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vNzHyrPRIT4>
- ➔ **Part III:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PpvnwUAKlv4>

High Post Moves

Practice Plan:

- a. Fundamentals: Flashing to the Ball
 - i. Catch with Two Hands and Rip Through
- b. 1-on-0: Square Up and Cross-Step
- c. 1-on-1 with Advantage: Defender Starts with Back to the Basket
- d. 1-on-1: Don't Provide Any Space
- e. Decision-Making: 2-on-2 with Help
 - i. Cross-Step Past Defender
 - ii. Kick to a Baseline Shooter

Observations:

During this practice, there were thirteen players and one coach so the team split into two groups at each end of the court. The first exercise was meant to serve as active recovery and reinforce the concept of moving towards the passer and giving a firm target (Lambert, 2009). Players were encouraged to keep the ball moving while pivoting and rip or sweep through swiftly.

All players practiced all the drills since everyone should be a scoring threat from the high post area. Most of the time was devoted to the non-dominant hand. All of the players are right-handed so they spent most of the time dribbling into the middle with the left hand. The final drill simulated the idea of dribbling into the help defence and moving the ball to an open shooter.

Frequent cues included using the body as a separator between the ball and the basket and attacking the hoop aggressively with a minimum number of dribbles. The 2-on-2 drill highlighted some performance gaps away from the ball, such as the help defender leaving to help too early and the open shooter neglecting to communicate at times. On the positive side, players were able to take the idea of a catch, square up and cross-step and combine it with other skills to create new moves.

YouTube Clips:

➔ **Part I:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCW629VkhI8>

➔ **Part II:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NUYYaazGHY8>

VIDEO ANALYSIS

Adolescents remain committed, enthusiastic, and positive if caring adults acknowledge their different interests and talents (Subban, 2007, pp. 938-939). One player may prefer multiple repetitions supplemented with verbal instructions whereas a teammate may require visual demonstrations on the court and assisted by video technology.

The explanation phase should include in-person demonstration, video analysis and images or graphics. Eighty-percent of what basketball players absorb is visual information, compared to twenty-percent for oral and written data (Pasquali, Coach Youth Basketball, v. 1.0, 2010, p. 7). The more visual the medium, the greater the recall.

ROLE MODELS

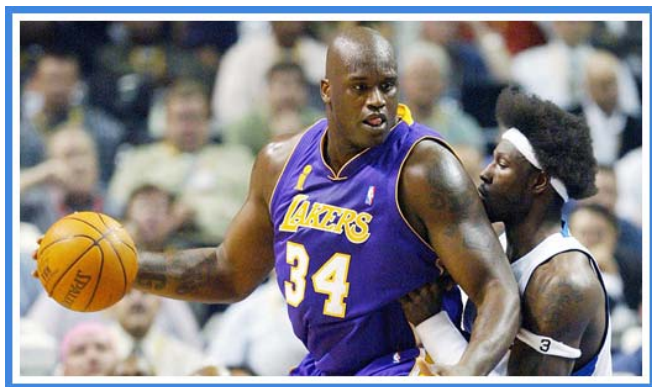
Adolescents may appreciate to see how a well-respected athlete adjusted their game as they progressed through their career. Video permits youth to watch their heroes in action and see how they succeeded and failed. Shaquille O'Neal is one of the most influential role models today because of his sporting achievements and media presence (Bush, Martin, & Bush, 2004, p. 115).

Shaq: The Big Player Development

Sport fans and the public at large will remember Shaq because of how he combined athleticism, skill and charisma on and off the court. Sustaining his place atop the pyramid of posts from 1992 to 2011 required the Big Aristotle to develop his game constantly, growing from a powerful force inside to a well-rounded basketball player.

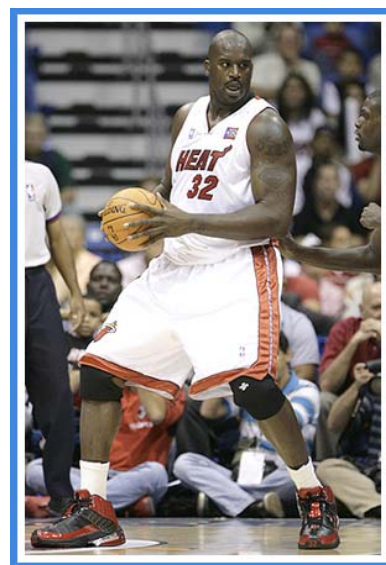
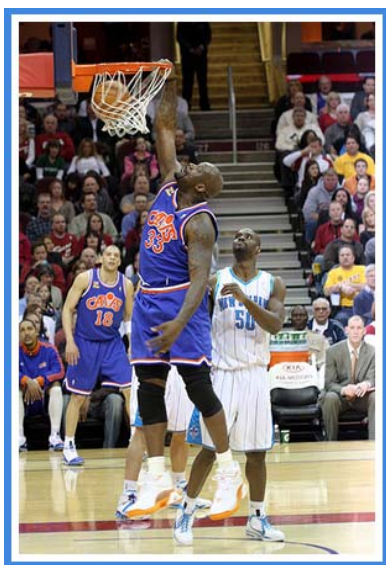
The Big Cactus may have been initially known for breaking backboards (compelling the Association to reinforce the basket supports) as a rookie and losing a memorable battle in the post with Hakeem Olajuwon during the 1995 Finals but since then he has made significant leaps. The Big Shamrock may have lost some speed, strength and explosiveness as he aged but he added technique to complete his game.

MANY MOVES OF SHAQUILLE O'NEAL



Shaq often scanned the middle of the court while posting up. When the defence shifted, he spun away from the help and scored.

Shaq's large frame kept the ball away from the defender as he released his hook shot.



Shaq's combination of size, strength and explosiveness enabled him to cross-step into the key, elevate and dunk.

Shaq used shoulder and head fakes to confuse the defence.

Phoenix Shaq • Offensive Rebound

Shaq assumes a position along the baseline on the weak-side of the wide key. After jumping high for a long rebound, he protects the ball with his body. Stepping with his left foot allows Shaq to gain space, permitting him to explode and finish with a powerful dunk.

→→→ Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-9BNaf4k5co>

L.A. Shaq • Hook Shot

Shaq pivots towards the middle and realizes that a double-team awaits him. He pivots to the baseline. He uses a shoulder fake to get the defender in the air, waits and makes a hook shot.

→→→ Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2GTn5Dm9U1o>

Miami Shaq • Shot-Fake and Dunk

Shaq steps into the paint and seals his defender with his front foot so he can receive a pass from the top of the key. The Heat have spaced the court to curtail double-teaming; when the defender drops down from the top of the key, Shaq pivots away from him. Although he misses the first dunk, he remains balanced and grabs the rebound. Shaq gathers himself, executes a shoulder fake to get the shot-blocker out of position and finishes strong.

→→→ Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-ZJpwENUmc>

L.A. Shaq • Cross-Step Dunk

Pivoting towards the middle and keeping the ball high, Shaq forces the defence to react. When David Robinson and the help defenders overplay the first shot-fake, Shaq cross-steps and dunks.

→→→ Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERhlfZK6fHM>

Cleveland Shaq • Baseline Spin

Sensing that his defender is off-balance, Shaq leans towards the middle to increase his positional advantage. Immediately, he spins to the baseline and finishes.

→→→ Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXggfe3YQGo>

L.A. Shaq • Alley-Oop

After communicating with the passer on the wing, Shaq spins around the defender. Once he cross-steps with his left foot, he is past the defence and ready to receive and alley-oop pass.

→→→ Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-CG3IKYiyy4>

L.A. Shaq • Jump Hook

The ball is at the top of the key so Shaq seals his defender with his front foot and establishes a clear passing lane. After receiving the ball, he pivots towards the baseline using his forearm - within his own body space - to create room for a hook shot.

→→→ Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5yrfYhofNaM>

L.A. Shaq • Seal and Three-Point Play

As the battle in the post moves away from the block, Shaq shifts slightly towards the baseline so that his front foot seals David Robinson. There is a great deal of room and the weak-side defender is too far away to help. Shaq reverse pivots with his left foot in order to cut off the defence, protect the ball and score the three-point play.

→→→ Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8zLVRksYIQ>

Lessons to be Learned

Although the Diesel has announced his retirement from basketball, his desire to improve should remain an example to young players for years to come. The Big Baryshnikov could have remained satisfied with his status of a number one draft pick and member of the United States Olympic game but he was determined to improve and win championships .

IMITATION

ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT

Not every player is capable of learning at the same level as others. Coach direction, scaffolding and social interactions should be adapted to suit individual players and their Zone of Proximal Development (Subban, 2007, p. 937). Video analysis, 360° assessment from players and coaches and intense part-method drills which isolate the skill to be performed enable coaches to determine the current level of each player.

Some possess more co-ordination and ballhandling skills, preparing them to reach beyond the basics; others may need to practice the fundamentals and master one or two manoeuvres first. Some players may have already mastered the essentials and are ready to learn more complicated techniques; others know a few reliable moves but need to develop their decision-making skills in game situations.

Drills should be loaded depending on the current level of each player. Basic concepts include balanced stance, court positioning, rebounding and transition (Messina, 2008). As players improve, they should develop their pivoting, passing and catching skills. Subsequently, players can extend their shooting range, string multiple moves together and increase the role of the dribble in their offensive moves.

HABITS

For John Wooden, drills are a key part of the learning process. The goal is not to perform well on a drill but perfect the essential fundamental skills needed to perform under pressure in games (Gallimore & Tharp, 2004, p. 133). Most importantly, skills should be practiced correctly. Immediate constructive feedback and further demonstrations supplement the coach's initial explanation. As much as possible, young athletes should learn by doing. Multiple dynamic activities keep practices interesting and reinforce positive habits and (Stabeno, 2004, p. 100).

Early on in the learning process, beginners try to understand the main components of each action and move without making obvious mistakes. Once the performance becomes automated, skills are executed with minimal effort. Experts devote more of their attention to reading the situation, making decisions and anticipating what will occur next (Ericsson, 2006, p. 686).

The first set of drills should be very simple, allowing the players to perform the skill, whether it is a pivot or a shot close to the basket, as slowly as needed in order to understand what a correct repetition feels like. Coaches should never ignore a mistake nor should they provide too much feedback during the beginner stages of the activity. Instead, coaches should teach athletes to recover, refocus, and retry the skill (Halden-Brown, 2003, p. 123).

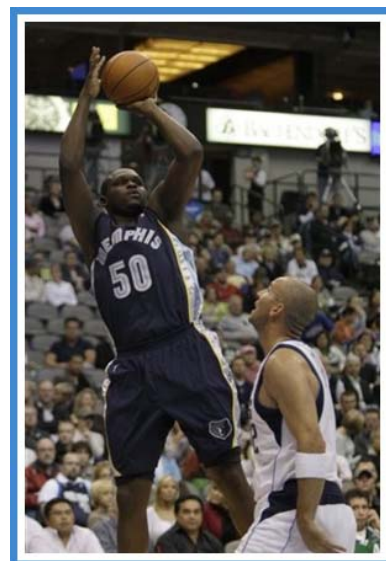
Players can gradually raise the speed of their movements to game intensity in a 1-on-0 setting. Scaffolding options include working with objects like an agility pole or a coach who guides the movement. The coach should play the role of the opponent when the defence is first introduced as other players may not have perfected their defensive techniques yet. Players can step in and provide token defence, perhaps using a blocking pad to help a post fight for position inside or merely playing positional defence with their hands up (Pasquali, 2010).

DYNAMIC VARIATIONS

Basketball practices at U.C.L.A. featured dynamic and demanding drills to push the limits of each player. The practice was organized down to the minute and filled to the brim with instructions from the coaching staff. Players had experienced numerous repetitions in diverse situations; the energetic pace of the practice assured that these repetitions were performed at game intensity and the consistent intervention of the coaches guaranteed that the athletes met standards of game quality (Gallimore & Tharp, 2004, p. 123).

John Wooden believed that practicing under pressure lightened the load during competition:

I wanted our team members to feel pressure so that their opponents would feel stress. I applied this pressure on the practice floor by creating a buzzing businesslike atmosphere that had an intensity and focus equal to an actual game.



Zach Randolph uses excellent footwork - developed at Pete Newell's Big Man Camp - to score twenty points per game.

John Wooden cautioned to “never mistake activity for achievement.” Each drill should focus on a mastery-oriented goal and expand the abilities each athlete’s Zone of Proximal Development (Gallimore & Tharp, 2004, p. 127). Novices spent more time in play situations than experts, who devoted themselves to challenging dedicated practice (Ericsson, 2006, p. 693).

Mastery is the result of “deliberate practice” which includes specific goals, immediate feedback and a focus as much on process as outcome. Individuals are continuously pushing their limits. Dynamic practices enable dedicated practice. Tasks that involve variety and diversity are more likely to foster willingness for learners to put forth maximum effort and become engaged in the process (Ames, 1992, p. 263).

Instead of lingering on a single drill or activity, lessons should alternate between a number of smaller exercises, each showcasing a distinct aspect of the concept and how all the components fit together. When contemplating problem-solving and decision-making beyond one’s current abilities, players only have limited attention spans (Ericsson, 2006, pp. 700-701). Everyone should collaborate with each other and take turn fulfilling leadership responsibilities, such as giving feedback after a controlled scrimmage or demonstrating a skill.

REPETITION

NON-JUDGMENTAL OBJECTIVE FEEDBACK

Descriptive instructions are an important type of feedback. Dedicated practice - for example posting up manoeuvres - should be followed by prompt correction regarding skills that are lagging and lacking. Technical instructions are common among elite basketball coaches and conducive towards mastery-oriented goals (Bloom, Crumpton, & Anderson, 1999, p. 167).

Over fifty percent of John Wooden’s teaching was clear and concise feedback. He neither minced words nor allowed himself to become carried away by emotion -- the advice was strictly related to the task at hand. Wooden also urged athletes to work hard (12.7 percent of instruction), combined the incorrect demonstration of a skill with a correction and appropriate demonstration (8.0%) and provided plenty of compliments (6.9%), especially for reserve players. The Hall of Fame coach rarely adopted a negative or accusatory tone of voice (6.6%) (Gallimore & Tharp, 2004, pp. 123-129).

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Post move instruction begins with identification of the correct pivot foot and a reminder to keep the ball high. Afterwards, there is a demonstration of how to remain balanced and a suggestion to feint in one direction before attacking the basket. Given multiple intelligences, players must not only hear the lesson but see it in action and feel the contrast between success and failure.

During these diverse activities, coaches should adjust their position so they can view the repetitions of the fundamentals and offer immediate feedback (Pasquali, Coach Youth Basketball, v. 1.0, 2010, p. 7). The **Lead** refereeing position is suitable to observe the post play with the basketball and the **Centre** position is a good spot when the post is away from the ball.

MISTAKES

Basketball can be a game of chaotic and continuous action. While supervising post play, coaches should keep the interruptions to a minimum and permit players to make their own adjustments. A free-flowing style of play followed by critical evaluation enables players to think for themselves and learn to love the excitement of the sport (Stabeno, 2004, p. 155).

Players learn by making mistakes and by feeling uncomfortable (Stein, 2011). A young post player may struggle with their confidence so it becomes even more critical for the coach to understand and support them (Messina, 2008). This does not mean that a coach should never correct errors but do so delicately so it does not become the root of conflict within the team.

It is difficult to create trust among the squad at first. If a post who is learning the game fails early in the season, it can create a lack of confidence (the individual may doubt themselves or the other team members may feel that the player is unreliable). Coaches can structure practices and games so that the young post has plenty of opportunities to succeed, emphasizing transition, basic post moves and open shots (Messina, 2008).

Mistakes - like a travelling violation - are windows into techniques and skills that can be improved. Gradually players will address the error - such as balance, court positioning, ballhandling or decision-making - and move on to the next step. John Wooden stated: "If you're not making mistakes, then you're not doing anything. I'm positive that a doer makes mistakes."

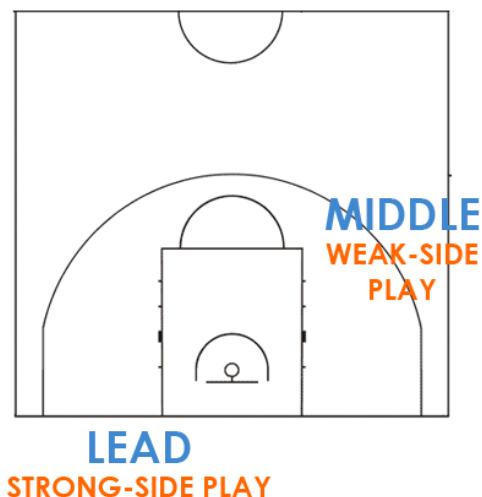
An adolescent athlete moving into a more advanced category (skill level or age range) is not only battling the opposition but a rapidly changing body as well. There are bound to be missteps -- modeling patience encourages players to do likewise. Teenagers may become concrete thinkers who feel that they are doomed to repeat the same mistakes endlessly. Coaches who acknowledge improvement can challenge and nurture players to reach higher standards (Dweck, 2006, p. 198).

SCAFFOLDING

Once players experience success in the closely controlled guided-discovery drills, coaches should remove the scaffolding. 1-on-1 play is live but includes an advantage for the offence (favourable court spacing, timing, or body positioning). If the young player performs the same skills successfully against a real defender (who was hindered by starting a step back, beginning a second later or needing to pivot to get into position) and confidence grows (Pasquali, Coach Youth Basketball, v. 1.0, 2010, pp. 38-41).

The advantages should be switched and the situations altered so they are similar but not identical. Gradually, the advantages decrease until they no longer exist. Players must execute skills under

COACHING POSITIONS



pressure, displaying physical, technical and mental skills simultaneously. An extra defender may double-team the post after they initiate their move, the ball moves swiftly around the perimeter as the posts adjust or the half-court set does not go exactly as planned.

CHALLENGES

INCREASE COMPLEXITY

First, players should execute the skills correctly at a slow speed (whatever speed ensures a focus on learning the proper movements). Then, they should accelerate the pace of drills without defence, still emphasizing the process (the Mikan Drill, taking ten shot from each elbow). Finally, there should be some type of pressure (statistics, concrete goals).

Goals - and the pressure that accompany them - cannot be introduced until the movement is mastered and confidence rises (Messina, 2008). Dynamic difficulty adjustment produces tension between mastery and the challenge of the activity. When raising the complexity of the task, coaches must also raise the confidence level of the participants (Hume, 2011, p. 198).

INTRODUCE DECISION-MAKING

Throughout this process, post players must interact with their teammates and make decisions based on the actions of their opponents. Initially, the athletes may react most of the time but they should become able to anticipate the play as they gain experience. Coaches should adjust the physical and mental challenge of the drills to suit the abilities of each group (Pasquali, 2010). Acquiring and applying skills encourages the development of communications abilities and cognitive functions (Subban, 2007, p. 944).

CONSOLIDATION

The potential for growth is increased if student-athletes are engaged and are provided the opportunity to consolidate their learning, associating new knowledge with existing information. The teacher-coach role is to provide purposeful instruction and facilitate meaningful experiences which allow the adolescent to achieve their Zone of Proximal Development (Subban, 2007, pp. 937-944). Participating in game situations - trying, succeeding, failing and learning - increases court awareness and mental expertise in a way that observation cannot (Ericsson, 2006, p. 693).

SOCIAL LEARNING

We live in a social environment where thousands of personal interactions cause learning and inform human development (Hume, 2011, p. 122). Individual improvement cannot occur in a vacuum; eventually players must practice their skills in a team situation in order to develop communication and decision-making skills.

Practicing post moves is not fulfilling activity when it is the outcome instead of part of a process. Appropriate part-method drills include a high and a low post working together to get open, two posts and a passer playing against two interior defenders and a wing and a post working with an

open shooter on the weak-side. Setting small team goals and competing within practice boosts the enjoyment of sport. Collaboration - especially when combining two different skill sets to overcome a tricky problem - unlocks each person's potential for growth (Robinson, 2010).

PERFORMANCE UNDER PRESSURE

Teams that perform effectively under pressure take personal responsibility, trust each other, communicate clearly and learn from mistakes (Euroleague.net, 2011). Coaches can help by stating the responsibilities of each player involved in the play and how they can succeed:

- Posts: run the floor, gain advantageous position, win battle of front foot, provide a target and catch the ball, regain balance, finish strong;
- Guards: use a variety of fakes (ball, jab-step, head and shoulder) to mislead defence, throw an accurate pass at the appropriate velocity, cut the half-court through after passing to shift the defence;
- Weak-Side Players: maintain good spacing, assume a ready position; and
- All Players: Communicate double-team information (Messina, 2008).

Make it easier for posts to handle anxiety by showing how one situation applies to another. It is easier for athletes to make decisions under pressure when they can transfer what they learned in one setting to the task at hand (Hume, 2011, pp. 202-203).

CREATIVITY

The final step is for the coach to guide the players to become creative in their play on the court. Instead of fighting for position, a player can pass to the perimeter and repost; instead of forcing a hero shot, a player can draw the double-team and dish to a teammate for the open lay-up. Creativity is a thinking skill which is imaginative, original and valuable (Robinson, 2010).

STANDARDS

360° ASSESSMENT

When a team adopts 360° Assessment, all players can obtain feedback from multiple perspectives. Players self-evaluate themselves and their peers while receiving feedback from coaches. For a squad utilizing a growth mindset, 360° Assessment enhances communication and recognizes that change is ongoing (London & Beatty, 1993, p. 354).

Initially, adolescent self-perception is likely to be biased, especially among those with A.D.H.D. who might be frustrated with their lack of success in school. Unfortunately, teenagers are not necessarily self-aware and may have illusions of invulnerability or self-esteem issues (Straub,



Blake Griffin won the Pete Newell Big Man Award in college before becoming a wing player in the pros. Practicing with the guards at Oklahoma eased his transition away from the post when he reached the next level.

1993, p. 77). Positive feedback, along with training and instruction can empowers players to better evaluate themselves and each other.

Young posts must understand the physical, technical and mental requirements to play the position. In order for the performance to become automated, athletes need to practice on their own. Reflective learning, beginning with an accurate self-assessment of their current level, facilitates progress towards mastery goals (Ericsson, 2006, p. 687). Coaches should instruct athletes on positive self-talk and performance cues; players need to know how to perform the skills but how to correct themselves when the coach is not present (Stabeno, 2004, p. 111).

ALLOW PLAYERS TO DEMONSTRATE EXPERTISE

Humans appreciate the opportunity to improve and demonstrate mastery of a skill that personally interests them. Tasks which require dedicated practice and cognitive thinking must challenge a person in order to motivate them. Intrinsic motivation is fully cultivated when people are self-directed and working towards meaningful targets (Pink, 2010).

It is not necessary for athletes to achieve a performance goal by winning a big game or scoring many points but rather to do their best and showcase their abilities. Constructive feedback can enhance this feeling of self-satisfaction. Those who see the deliberate practice as a pathway to self-actualization are more likely to continue in the sport (Ericsson, 2006, p. 695).

Basketball is a recreational activity: the more skills players can perform with the ball in a variety of court locations, the more fun they will have (Newell & Nater, 2008, p. 7). Basketball players can demonstrate mastery during 3-on-3 play (more space, more touches, more opportunities) or executing a complex manoeuvre which allows them to apply previous learned skills.

SET NEW GOALS

Elite performers and their instructors relentlessly identify specific goals and chart their progress. Youth who employ mastery-oriented goals with objectives to keep learning continuously increase their skills and abilities have greater self-confidence, believing that they can achieve many future tasks (Smiley & Dweck, 1994, p. 1733).

You get what you are willing accept and coaches should not only set high standards but provide the technical coaching and effective praise to help players get there (Rana, 2009). Great players are always mindful of what's next and what else needs to be done. According to John Wooden:

For an athlete to function properly, he must be intent. There has to be a definite purpose and goal if you are to progress. If you are not intent about what you are doing, you aren't able to resist the temptation to do something else that might be more fun at the moment.



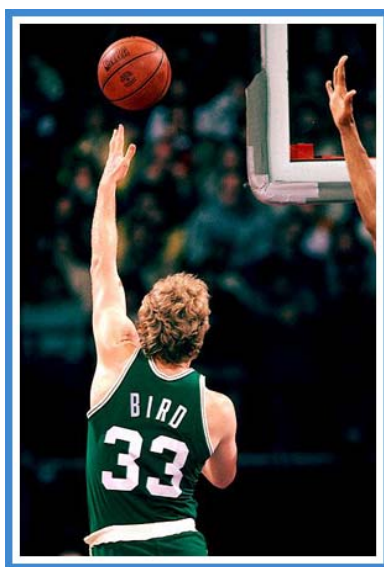
Dwight Howard has been working out with Hakeem Olajuwon to develop his post game and become a bigger scoring threat for at the international level.

As a player improves, the coaches provide immediate feedback and refine their Zone of Proximate Development. As the level of skill rises, experts concentrate on mastering new challenges by deliberate practice involving problem solving and specialized training techniques (Ericsson, 2006, pp. 695-700).

A growth mindset convinces youth that learning is always in progress so they do not feel stressed if they experience some failure or delayed success (Smiley & Dweck, 1994, p. 1739). The pressure is reduced and anxiety lowered so players have more energy to focus on executing advanced skills making decisions, and solving problems.

POSITIVISM

Mindsets and self-esteem bias how one monitors their performance. Moods and emotions can affect self-perceptions of behaviour as it occurs and when it is recalled later (Bandura, Social Cognitive Theory of Self-Regulation, 1991, p. 250). Emphasize positivism so student-athletes feel in control of the situation. Reframing the situation and seeing other perspectives turn a negative situation into an optimistic one (Jensen, 2003, pp. 29-32). Ultimately, the responsibility rests with the learner to choose to change their own situation.



Every great N.B.A. player has taken the time to practice their post moves because they knew that they would need them.

3

Conclusion

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IMPORTANCE OF POST PLAY

MODERN BASKETBALL

All players should learn to play in the post. It is not a matter of pigeon-holing taller kids into one position or refusing to teach skills to some because of where they play on the court. Everyone deserves to learn all the necessary techniques that they will need to handle any aspect of the game.



Skilled guards, such as Dwyane Wade and Jason Kidd, must be able to play inside.

Plan for diverse players - tall guards, forwards with a long wingspan or very athletic players - to assume the position, if only for a few plays. The sport requires each team member to master the physical, technical and mental skills (Newell & Nater, 2008, p. 13). In the recently complemented N.B.A. Finals, bigger guards (Jason Kidd) and wings (LeBron James) took shorter defenders into the post in order to create an advantage.

THE NEXT LEVEL

Basketball has changed radically in recent years. Canada aims to move up the F.I.B.A. rankings and must play against tough competition to do so. Coaches must adjust to the international game and alter what how they instruct the game. Rule changes across the world have accelerated play and Canada's teams must train harder and smarter in order to keep up.

It is necessary that post players become quicker, able to face the basket and attack the hoop. New hand-check rules place a value on explosive moves by the defender in order to score from outside the paint (Krolik, 2011). Due to the wider key, posts cannot exclusively play under the hoop. All positions, especially forwards and posts, demand 1-on-1 skills (Scariolo, n.d.).

A TALENT PIPELINE

Long Term Athlete Development must prepare young players for the national team. Playing at an elite level should be an honour and a chance to showcase one's mastery of the game (Tooley, 2011). A system which provides youth with fundamental skills early and expands those abilities as the player grows within the system has the best chance of success (Pasquali, 2010).

To match the high quality of post play abroad, Canada must produce strong, quick and skilled a in the coming years. A young player who may lack overall talent yet displays the physical, technical and metal skills to play inside should be considered for Elite Development Programs.

CLOSING THOUGHT

"Failure is never fatal but failing to change may be."

- John Wooden

YOUTUBE CHANNEL

The video clips used for instructional purposes can be found on my YouTube channel.

→→→ Link: <http://www.youtube.com/user/coachbourgase>

→ **Specific Examples of International Post Play:**

<http://www.youtube.com/playlist?p=PLCEE45B972E6D90C2>

→ **Basic Post Moves:**

<http://www.youtube.com/playlist?p=PL235E0ABDE353CBE9>

→ **Practice Footage:** These clips are unlisted. To access the footage, enter the link into the browser window exactly as it appears above.

→ **Shaquille O'Neal Development:**

<http://www.youtube.com/playlist?p=PL34567C8001FAD71A>

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"Basketball instruction is directed at the simple fundamentals of the game. It begins with the position of the feet and maintaining good body balance."

- John Wooden