

BASKETBALL ARTICLE

My Favourite Drill – Post Play

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Teaching good post play involves a few simple things for the post player to think about. The most important of these is getting position – either offensively or defensively – so you have an advantage over your opponent's post player. We define position as being where you want to be on offense and making your opponent take a position where he does not want to be when you are on defense.

We try to make post play very simple for our players. Generally, these are the players who are slower on their feet than the perimeter players. If we require the post players to do too much thinking about their play, this slows them down even more. Therefore, we give a few simple rules dealing with this position.

DEFENSIVE POST PLAY

Defensive post play can be very simple but yet very hard to consistently play throughout the game. Our basic rule is: NEVER give up the angle. This simply means that we may play on the top side when the ball is above the free-throw line or play on the low side in a three-quarter front when the ball is below the free-throw line. But once the ball is entered, we do not want to give up the angle for an easy drop step to the basket.

If there is a choice to make when playing defense in the post, we always tell our post to play behind and make the offensive post turn and shoot a tough jump shot over you rather than drop step to the basket for an easy two points.

In high school, we have found that many post players have a difficult time when they have to turn and face the basket. Of course, we may completely front an opponent based on our scouting reports. In that case, we need weak-side help. The weak-side help may come from a guard on the help side, a center from the low block side or a forward from the help side. Our general rule is the help side offenders must be on the rim line if the ball is below the free-throw line extended or one step to your man side off the rim line when the ball is above the free-throw line. This rule helps in covering the lob pass to the post when we are in a fronting position. We tell our players to always move when the ball is in the air so you can get position as the ball is caught by the offensive post player.

We do not teach the arm bar as a defensive technique simply because this is called a foul on a consistent basis. We instead stress using our feet and hips to get position so we do NOT need to use an arm bar in the back to push the offensive post.

If the offensive player never posts up in the lane, then we teach our defensive post player to release pressure, drive the inside shoulder and leg around the offensive post to a complete front position. We want the defensive post to drop his shoulder to the hip of the offensive post. This low position allows for very good leverage without using the hands to push or shove the offensive post.

We have found that giving the defensive post player a few simple rules makes it much easier for the defensive post to really work on the offensive post. In addition to the above rules, we work very hard on using hips and legs to prevent an offensive post player from establishing the position they want. We work on keeping the arms up with the fingers pointed to the ceiling so the official will not call us for using the arms when we are trying to prevent the offensive post from being in his comfort zone.

OFFENSIVE POST PLAY

Again, we try to use some very simple rules for our offensive post players so we do not restrict their quickness and they can move without a long thought process. We want to have our post players establish a “go to” move with their back to the basket and a “go to” move facing the basket in the post. This move is taught first with the feet. We work with the offensive post to seal the defensive post player by using the feet to keep position and keeping the elbows at a 90-degree angle to avoid a push off foul. When the ball is caught in the post and we have position, we step to the basket so our shoulders are parallel to the backboard. This seals off the defensive players so he must foul to stop the shot.

Once they have established this move, then we work on one counter move to their “go to” move. For example, a “go to” move facing the basket would be an inside pivot with a jump shot. The counter move to this would be what we call a “McHale” move. Show the jump shot and then rip the ball through and cross over to go to the basket. This kind of thought process helps the post player to keep everything very simple. We work extremely hard on footwork with each move, which is much more important than knowing how to make many different moves to the basket.

Post players need to understand the angle principle. Defensively, we never want to give up the angle, but on offense we want to establish an angle. If we get the defender on either the high side or the low side, we use our FEET to keep the angle we have on the defensive player. Foot movement will help establish the angle rather than the hands and arms to push and shove to get the angle.

We teach the post players first of all to make a move away from where they feel the pressure. This may be a drop step, jump hook or hook shot to baseline or to the lane. If the post player receives the ball and does not feel pressure OR he feels pressure from the defensive post from directly behind, he will turn and face the basket. If the defensive player uses his knee to push us out of the position we are trying to establish our rule is to release pressure, turn and face the defensive player and then re-establish our post position.

Once the offensive player learns to read pressure and reacts against this pressure, he has made great strides in becoming a good offensive post player.

Lastly, establishing position in the offensive post starts as the post player runs down the floor and gets to the three-point line. This is where he starts to use his legs and hips to prevent the defensive post player from getting a good defensive post position. Again, we work very hard on the footwork involved in establishing this position on the defensive player.