



Basketball Terminology

FIBA Europe Coaching Department

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Basketball Terminology

A

Advance step: A step in which the defender's lead-foot steps towards her/his man, and her/his back foot slides forward.

Alley-oop action: An offensive action in which a player passes the ball to a teammate near the basket in order to make her/him jump, catch the ball on the fly and shoot, e.g. after an on-ball screen action.

Alley-oop shot: See [Shots](#).

ATO: After Time-Out action, in which generally a coach can draw some particular play, e.g. to steal a basket.

Assist: See [Stats](#).

At the level (aka "Up to touch"): An on-ball screen defense in which the screeners' defender starts at the level of the screen, "touching" the screener.



B

Baby hook: See [Shots](#).

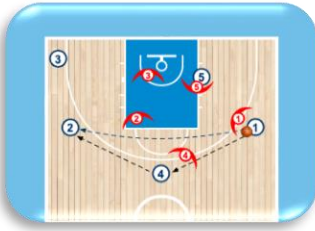
Backcourt: The half of the court a team is defending. The opposite of the frontcourt. Also used to describe parts of a team: backcourt = all guards (front court= all forwards and centers).

Backdoor cut: Also: "Back cut", see [Cuts](#).

Back screen: See [Screens](#).

Ball fake: A sudden movement by the player with the ball intended to cause the defender to move in one direction, allowing the passer to pass in another direction. Also: "Pass fake".

Ball reversal: Passing the ball from one side of the court to the other.



Ball screen: See [Screens](#).

Ball side: The half of the court (if the court is divided lengthwise) that the ball is on. Also: "Strong side". The opposite of the help side.



Banana cut: See [Cuts](#).

Bank shot: See [Shots](#).

Barkley move: A dribble maneuver in which the player dribbles from the perimeter into the low post block for a post-up action.



Baseball pass: See [Passes](#).

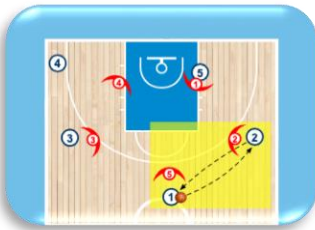


Page 4 of 66

Blocked shots: See [Stats](#).

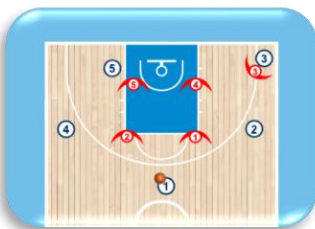
Board: Also: "Rebound".

Boomerang pass: See [Passes](#).



Bounce pass: See [Passes](#).

Box-and-one: A combination defense in which four defenders play zone in a box formation, and the fifth defender guards one player man-to-man.



Box out: Also: "Block out".

Box set: A formation in which four players align themselves as the four corners of a box. Often used for baseline out-of-bounds plays.



Brush screen (or Brush cut): See [Screens](#)

Bump the cutter: To step in the way of a cutter who is trying to cut to the ball for a pass.

Butt screen: See [Screens](#).

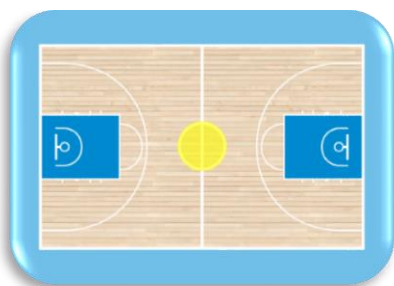
Buzzer beater: A basket that is scored in the final seconds of a game (right before the buzzer sounds), especially one which results in a win or a tie that leads to overtime play.

C

Catch&shoot: See [Shots](#).

Center: The position in which a player, usually the tallest player on the team, stays near the basket. Also: "5".

Center circle: The painted circle at midcourt used for the opening jump ball.

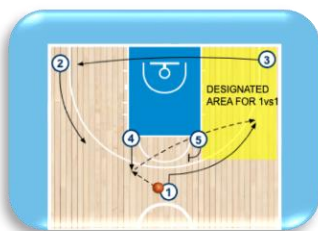


Charge: A violation when a player with the ball runs into a defender who is standing still. Also: "Charging foul".

Chest pass: See [Passes](#).

Chin the ball: To hold the ball with both hands under the chin, elbows out, to protect the ball.

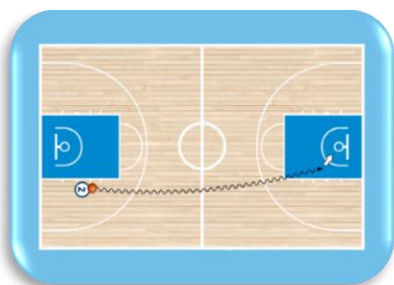
Clear-Out Play: A set play designed to clear an area of the court of all offensive players without the ball so the player with the ball can play 1-on-1.



Closing out: When a defender sprints to guard a player who has just received a pass.

- **Full closing out:** When a defender sprints to take away the shot from a player who has just received a pass.
- **Smart closing out:** When a defender sprints and makes fakes to guard a player who has just received a pass in order to make her/him take a shot (used with non-shooter player).

Coast to coast: Dribbling the ball from the defensive - to the offensive end of the floor and shooting.



Combination defense: A defense that is part man-to-man and part zone. Also: "Junk defense".

Containing screen: See [Screens](#).

Continuity offense: A sequence of player and ball movement that repeats until a good shot is created.

Control dribble: A dribble maneuver in which the player keeps her/his body between the defender's body and the ball.

Crossover dribble: A dribble maneuver in which a player dribbles the ball in front of her/his body so they can change the ball from one hand to the other.

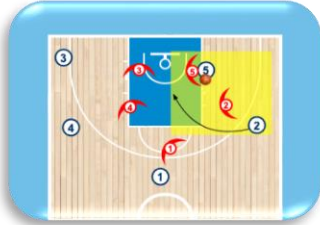
Cross screen: See [Screens](#).

Curl pass: See [Passes](#).

Curl shot: See [Shots](#).

Cuts: A sudden running movement to get open for a pass.

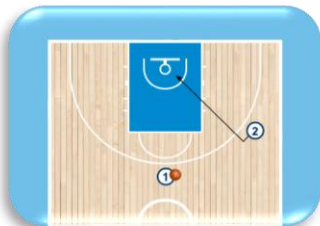
- **Banana cut:** A wide, curving cut, as opposed to a cut that is a straight line.



- **Back cut:** Also: "Backdoor cut".
- **Backdoor cut:** An offensive play in which a player on the perimeter steps away from the basket, drawing the defender with her/him, and suddenly cuts to the basket behind the defender for a pass. The opposite of a l-cut.



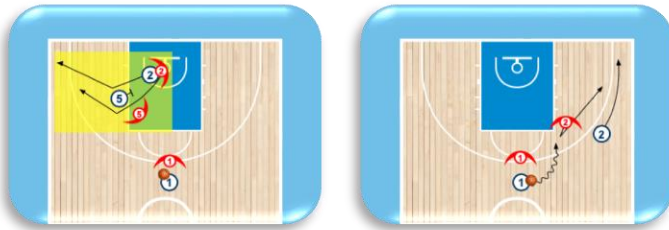
- **Basket cut:** A cut toward the basket.



- **Curl cut:** A cut that takes the player around a screen toward the basket.



- **Fade cut:** A cut that takes the player away from the ball. For example, after using a baseline screen or on the defenders help (like shown in the graphic).



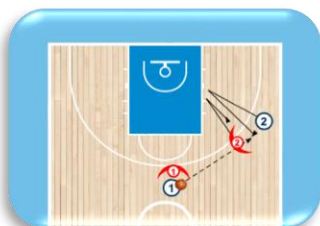
- **Flare cut:** Also: "Fade cut".
- **Flash cut:** A cut that takes the player from the low post to the high post, or in the middle of the paint from behind the defense (mostly used to describe a cut against a zone).



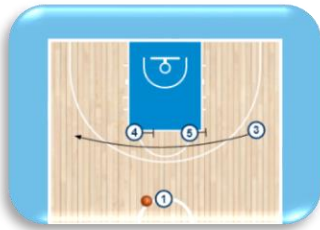
- **Flex cut:** A cut from the weakside corner to the ball side low post, using a screen at the weakside low post.



- **I-cut:** An offensive play in which a player on the perimeter steps toward the basket, drawing the defender with her/him, and suddenly cuts to the perimeter for a pass. The opposite of a backdoor cut.



- **Iverson cut:** A horizontal cut from one wing to the other, while receiving two screens from the bigs at each elbow.



- **Popout cut:** A cut taken around a screen straight to the ball.



- **Shuffle cut:** A cut that takes a player around a screen on the highpost to the basket.



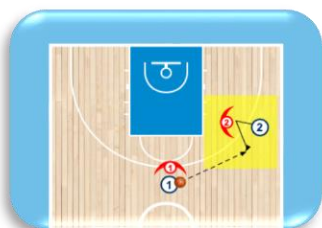
- **Shallow cut:** A cut from the top of the key to the ballside corner.



- **UCLA cut:** A cut that takes the player from the top of the key to the lowpost over a screen at the highpost.



- **V-cut (or L-cut when 90° angle):** e.g. The player starts at the lowpost and cuts to the highpost, initiates contact with the defender and then cuts to the wing. It can also be executed from the wing; in this case the player cuts to the lowpost and comes back out.



D

Deep roll: An on-ball screen action in which the roller cuts deep to the basket.



Defensive rebound: A rebound made off a missed shot at the basket a team is defending.

Defensive slide: The quick "step-slide" movement a defender makes when closely guarding the dribbler.

Defensive stance: The stance used to play defense-knees bent, feet wide, arms out, etc.

Defensive stop: Gaining possession of the ball before the offensive team scores.

Defensive transition: When the team on offense suddenly gives up possession of the ball and has to convert from offense to defense.

Deflection: A defensive action in which a defender touches the basketball but doesn't get the steal (e.g. deflecting a pass or deflecting the dribble).

Delay offense: An offense used to take more time with each possession.

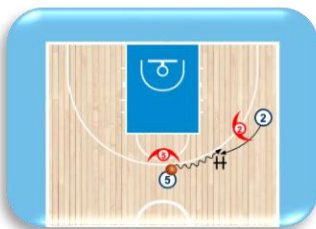
Denial defense: A defense in which a defender tries to prevent her/his man from receiving a pass.



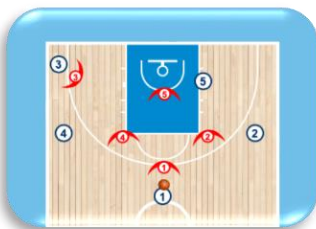
Denial stance: The stance used to play denial defense-body low, knees bent, hand and foot in the passing lane.

Deny the ball: To use a denial stance to keep the offensive player from receiving a pass.

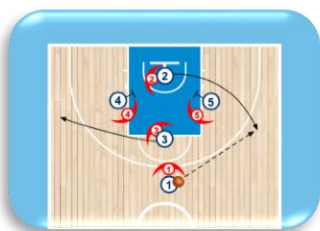
DHO: Dribble handoff.



Diamond-and-one: A combination defense in which four defenders play zone in a diamond formation and the fifth defender guards a specific offensive player man-to-man.



Diamond offense: A play in which a player, positioned under the basket, can come off either side of the down screens, while the high post player goes to the opposite side.



Diamond Press: A full-court press with a 1-2-1-1 formation.



Dig hard: More aggressive version of the yo-yo defense. Also: "Yo-Yo defense".



Dishing: A slang term for passing the ball to a player open for a shot, usually after dribble penetration.

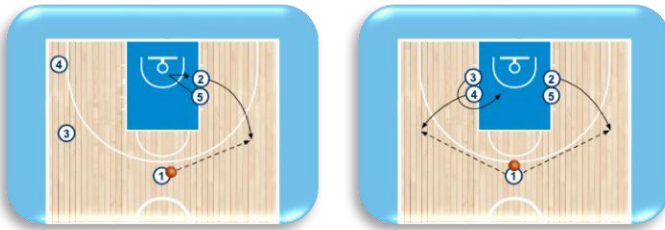
Double drag: See [Screens](#).

Double-double: See [Stats](#).

Double down: To drop from the perimeter, leaving your man or zone, to double-team a low post player.



Double low stack: When two offensive players set up at one of the blocks to run a play.



Double screen: See [Screens](#).

Double tag action: An on-ball screen action in which there are two offensive players positioned on the roll side (generally it's a top on-ball screen).



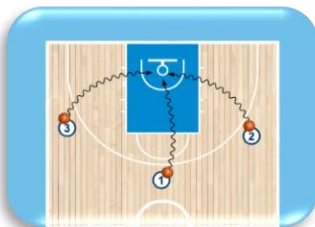
Double-teaming: A defense in which two defenders guard the same offensive player at the same time.

Down screen: See [Screens](#).

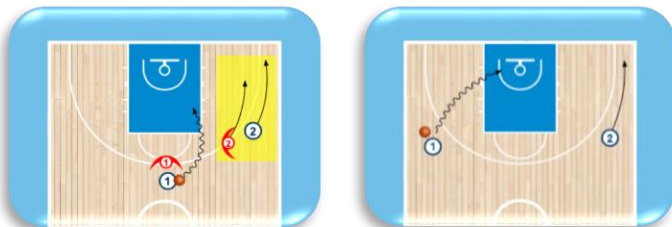
Drag screen: See [Screens](#).

Dribble: (1) To advance the ball by bouncing it on the floor. (2) The bounce of the ball caused by a player pushing the ball downwards.

Dribble penetration: When a dribbler is able to drive into the lane; she/he "penetrates" the defense.



Drift: Offensive action in which a player without the ball moves towards the baseline in order to adjust the spacing in the moment a penetration occurs and avoid her/his defender can stunt the ball handler. "Drift" is the movement, down, towards the baseline, "drift" is the movement, up, towards mid-court.



Drive: To attack the basket by dribbling hard at it.

Driving layup: See Finishes.

Drop: An on-ball screen defense in which the screener's defender is positioned a few steps below the screen, and then backpedals as the ballhandler comes off the screen.



Drop step: A low post move when an offensive player with her/his back to the basket swings one leg around the defender and uses it as a pivot foot to gain inside position.

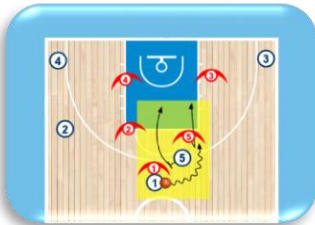
Duck in: Also: "Sealing".

Dunk: See Finishes.

Dunker spot: Also: "Short corner".

E

Elbow: The corner made by the intersection of the free throw line and the lane line. Each lane area has two elbows.

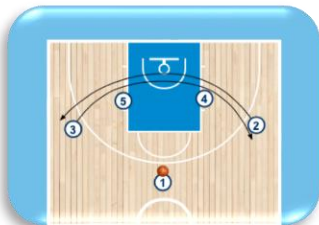


Elevator screen (aka “Gate”): See [Screens](#)

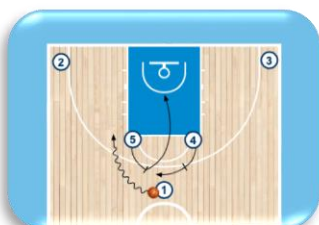
End line: Also: “Baseline”.

Entry: Beginning of a play. Can be used for Continuous-, Set- and Special plays. Most popular Entries:

- UCLA Cut
- Zipper Cut
- Power
- Wing Exchange



- Horns



Eurostep shot: See [Finishes](#).

F

Face up: Also: "Square up".

Fadeaway shot: See [Shots](#).

Fade cut: See [Cuts](#).

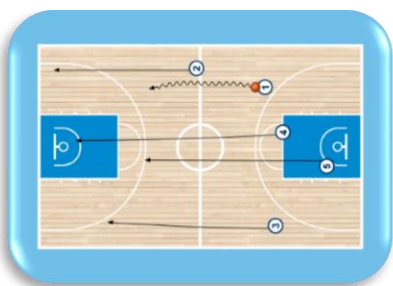
Fan defense: Also: "Ice". When the defense forces the ball toward the sideline.



Fast break: A play in which a team gains possession of the ball (through a defensive rebound, steal, or made shot) and then pushes the ball toward the other basket as fast as possible, hoping to catch the other team off guard and score an easy shot.

Field goal: A 2-or 3-point basket.

Filling the lanes: A fast break in which players from the offensive team run up the court in the right lane, the middle lane, and the left lane.



Freeze dribble: A dribble maneuver in which the ball handler, generally coming off an on-ball screen against a containing defense, suddenly stops running ("freeze"), keeping the dribble alive ahead of her/his body, avoiding the defender and re-attacking after a while in order to create a 2-on-1 action with the screener and the defender.

Finishes:

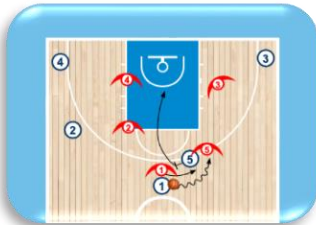
- **Alley-oop shot:** A shot involving a player catching a pass in the air and finishing with a layup or dunk before landing back on the court.
- **Dunk:** A shot in which a player brings the ball above the rim and slams it down into the hoop with one or two hands in which the player's hand(s) hit the top of the rim.
- **Driving layup:** A close-range shot following a dribble drive to the basket either when the defense is back and set or on a fastbreak. The shot is usually banked off the backboard but can also be over the front of the rim.
- **Eurostep shot:** A shot made after a penetration in which a player picks up her/his dribble, takes a lateral step in one direction in order to make her/his defender move and guard the penetration line created by that move and then quickly takes a second step in another direction, overstepping the defender and finishing at the rim. Together with the first step players can make a pass fake.
- **Ginobili eurostep:** A particular variant of the eurostep shot, in which the player after making her/his first step, moves the ball from one side to the other going above her/his head, preventing her/his defender from deflecting, or stealing the ball.
- **Indiana move:** A two-footed shot taken after a shot fake and a spin move. The player with the ball attacks the basket and makes 1,2 steps jump stop with the outside foot as pivot foot: she/he fakes to shoot making the defender jump and after goes for a reverse layup, getting all the way around.
- **Layup:** A finish taken close to the basket, usually laying the ball off the backboard into the basket. The shooter generally extends her/his arm, lifts her/his same-side knee, and aims the ball at the upper corner of the painted square on the backboard.
- **Power move:** A two-footed layup. The player after the 1,2 steps jump stop holds the contact with the defender, keeping the ball on the side and use the non-shooting arm to protect it.
- **Reverse layup:** A lay-up taken next to the basket in which the shooter uses the rim to protect herself/himself from a defensive help/contest, extending her/his arm from one side of the basket to the other one lifting her/his same-side knee, and aims the ball at the upper corner of the painted square on the backboard.
- **Spin move:** A shot taken next to the basket in which the shooter does a reverse pivot while bringing the ball around her/him to finish close to the basket.
- **Up&under move:** An advanced post move that starts out like a turnaround jump shot, but instead of shooting, the post player "pump fakes," causing the defender to rise out of their defensive stance. The post player steps by the defender and finishes with a layup.

Flagrant foul: Excessive physical contact (punching, kicking, etc.).

Flare cut: See Cuts.

Flare screen: See [Screens](#)

Flat hedge: An on-ball screen defense in which the screener's defender starts to defend just below the screen level. It's too high to call it "DROP" but not quite "At the level/Up to touch." It looks like to contain the ball handler's dribble penetration.



Flash cut: See [Cuts](#).

Flat ball screen: See [Screens](#)

Flip: An action in which the ball handler passes the ball to a teammate, who flips/pitches the ball back to the original ball handler.



Flip pass: See [Passes](#).

Flipping the screen action: An on-ball screen action in which the screener at the last moment changes the angle of the screen.



Floater: See [Shots](#).

Floppy action: An offensive alignment in which the point guard is on the top of the key, the shooting guard under the basket, the two bigs setting down screens on both sides and the small forward setting a staggered screen behind one of the two bigs.



Forward: A position usually played by a tall, athletic player. A "small forward" or a "3" plays on the wing, and a power forward or a "4" plays in the high or low post area.

Foul: A violation of the rules.

Foul line: Also: "Free throw line".

Foul shot: Also: "Free throw shot".

Foul trouble: (1) Player foul trouble occurs when a player accumulates three or four fouls and is in danger of fouling out. (2) Team foul trouble occurs when a team accumulates five or more team fouls in a quarter and is "in the bonus."

Free throw shot: See [Shots](#).

Free throw line: The line a player stands behind to shoot a free throw. Also: "Foul line".



Free throw line extended: An imaginary line extending from one end of the free throw line to the sidelines.



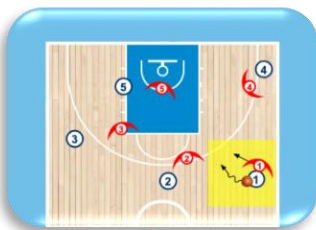
Front: To guard a player by standing directly in front of her/him and therefore between her/him and the ball.



Frontcourt: A team's offensive half of the court. The opposite of the backcourt. Also used to describe parts of a team: front court= all forwards and centers (backcourt = all guards)

Full-court press: A man-to-man or zone defense in which the players guard the other team in the frontcourt. Also: "Press".

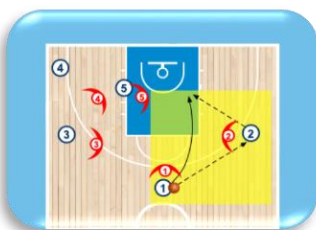
Funnel the ball: When the defense forces the ball toward the middle.



G

Ghost screen: See [Screens](#)

Give-and-go: An offensive play in which the player with the ball passes (gives) to a teammate and cuts (goes) to the basket to receive a return pass. One of the game's basic plays.



Ginobili eurostep: See [Finishes](#).

Goaltending: A violation in which a defender touches a shot as it nears the basket in a downward flight.

Gortat roll: An on-ball screen action in which the roller cuts to the basket and while the ball handler is using a hostage dribble, she/he sets another screen to her/his defender in order to create a lane for the ball handler.

Gortat screen: Also: "Hostage screen", see [Screens](#).

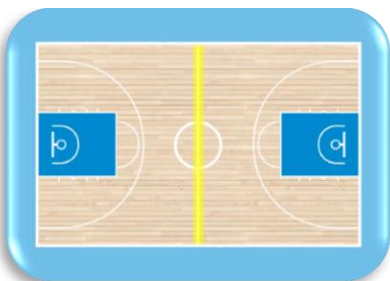
Guard: (1) A position on the perimeter. The point guard or "1" brings the ball up the court and begins the offense. The shooting guard, also: "2", is usually the team's best outside shooter. (2) To defend an offensive player closely.



Guide hand: The shooter's non-shooting hand. See also shooting hand.

H

Half-court line: The line at the center of the court parallel to the sidelines that divides the court in half. Also: "Midcourt line".

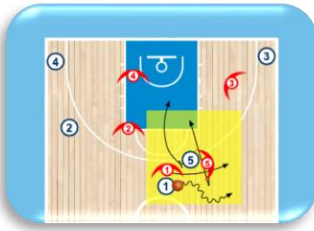


Hammer screen: See [Screen](#)

Hand-check: To make hand contact with a dribbler while guarding her/him.

Hang time: The time a player spends in the air from the liftoff of a jump to the landing of the jump.

Hedge: In a pick-and-roll, when the screener's defender steps into the path of the dribbler, so the dribbler has to hesitate, giving their defender time to get around the screen.



Held ball action: A situation when players from both teams are holding the ball at the same time without fouling each other.

Help and recover: A defensive move in which a defender leaves her/his assigned player to guard a teammate's assigned player and then goes back to guard her/his own player.



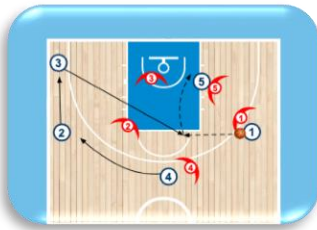
Help side: The half of the court (if the court is divided lengthwise) that the ball is not on. Also: "Weak side". The opposite of the ball side.



Help-side stance: The stance used to guard a help-side offensive player. Also: "Pistol stance".

Hesitation dribble: A dribble maneuver in which the dribbler hesitates, pretending to pick up her/his dribble, but suddenly continues to the basket. Also: "Stop-and-go dribble."

High-Low action: An action in which a player cuts from the weak side towards the free-throw line in order to receive a pass and create a triangle with the big man in the low post, guarded in a front move or $\frac{3}{4}$ denial stance.



High ball screen: See [Screens](#)

High post: The area around the free throw line.



Hoiberg roll: Also: "Slide action".

Hook pass: See [Passes](#).

Hook shot: See [Shots](#).

Hoop: Another name for the basket.

Hostage dribble: A dribble action in which the ball handler, after creating advantage and separation with her/his defender, stops driving to the basket and holds her/his defender behind herself/himself on the back dribbling ahead of the body. Very used after on-ball screen action.

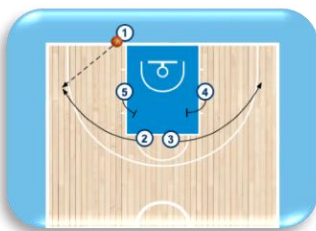
Hostage Screen: See [Screen](#).

I

Ice: An on-ball screen coverage in which the on-ball defender forces the ball handler to reject the screen. Screener defender will position on the "reject" side of the screen, mirroring the ball and covering the penetration line. On the side on-ball screen e.g. the defender of ball handler pushes her/him to the baseline. Also: "Fan", "Push down".



Inbound: To pass the ball to a teammate on the court from out-of-bounds.



Inbounder: The player who inbounds the ball.

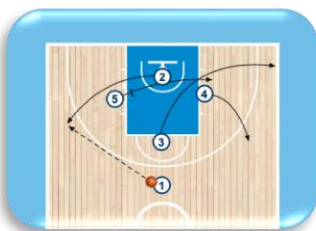
Indiana move: See [Finishes](#).

Inside-out dribble: An advanced dribbling move, a fake crossover dribble.

Intentional foul: Now called Unsportsmanlike foul.

Inverted ball screen: See [Screens](#)

Isolation play: An offensive play designed to have a specific player attack the basket 1-on-1. Also: "Iso play".



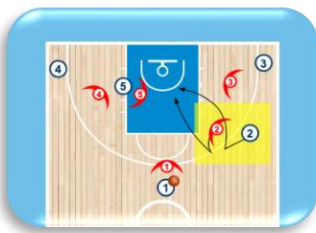
Iverson cut: See [Cuts](#)

J

Jab-and-cross: A play in which the offensive player makes a jab step in one direction and then follows it by driving by the defender in that direction.

Jab step: A short (6 to 8 inches) out-and-back step by an offensive player to see how the defender reacts.

Jam the cutter: When a defender steps in the way of a cutter to prevent her/him from cutting to the ball.



Jump ball: A procedure used to begin a game. The referee tosses up the ball in the center circle between two opposing players, who jump up and try to tip it to a teammate.

Jump hook: See [Shots](#).

Jump shot: See [Shots](#).

Jump stop: The action of coming to a complete stop, legs apart and knees bent, when dribbling or running; can be a one-foot or two-foot jump stop.

Jump to the ball: When a defender, after her/his man passes the ball, changing to a denial position so their man can't cut between her and the ball.



Junk defense: Also: "Combination defense".

L

Lane: The rectangular painted area between the baseline, the lane lines, and the free throw line. Also: "Paint".



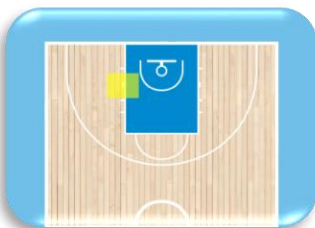
Layup: See [Finishes](#)

Lift: An offensive action in which a player without the ball moves to replace the spot left empty from the ball handler that is driving to the basket in order to adjust the spacing and the offensive balance of the team. "Drift" is the movement, down, towards the baseline, "drift" is the movement, up, towards mid-court.



Loose-ball foul: A foul committed when neither team has possession of the ball.

Low post: The area on one side of the basket around the block.



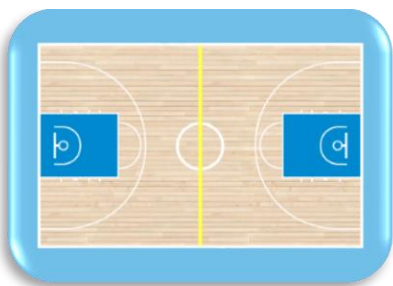
M

Man-to-man defense: A team defense in which each defender guards a specific player or man.

Man-to-man offense: A team offense used against man-to-man defense.

Matchup zone: A type of zone defense in which the team, according to the strategy, matches-up in order to make each defender guarding a specific player.

Midcourt line: Also: "Half-court line".



Mirror the ball: To follow the movement of the ball with your hands when closely guarding a player who is pivoting.

Mismatch: When an offensive player has an advantage over the defender that's currently guarding her/him. When this happens, the offense will usually look to isolate this matchup on the perimeter or in the low post.

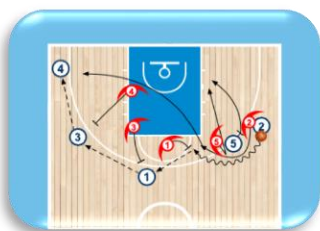
Moving pick: A violation that happens when a screener leans or moves after setting a screen.

N

Nail: It's the spot located at the very middle of the free throw line.



Next defense: A run and jump defensive tactic used often after an on-ball screen action has occurred or after a penetration in order to stop the ball and force the ball handler to pass it.



Non-shooting foul: A foul committed against a player who is not in the act of shooting.

Nowitzki shot: See [Shots](#).

O

Off-ball screen: See [Screens](#)

Offensive rebound: A rebound at the basket a team is attacking.

Offensive transition: When the team on defense suddenly gives up possession of the ball and has to convert from defense to offense.

Off-the dribble pass: See [Passes](#).

On-ball defense: Defense that occurs when a defender guards the player with the ball.

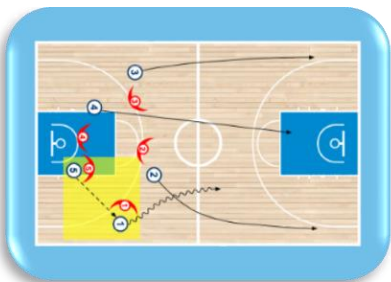
On-ball screen: Also: "Ballscreen", see [Screens](#).

One-Guard offense: A team offense used against zones with two defending guard up front (2-3 and 2-1-2 zones).



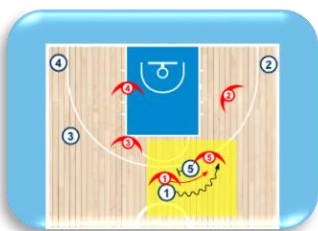
Open stance: The stance used to play help-side defense-feet apart, body balanced, knees bent, arms out.

Outlet: (1) To pass the ball after a defensive rebound to start the fast break. (2) The player who stays in the backcourt to receive an outlet pass.



Outlet pass: See Passes.

Over: An on-ball screen defense in which the on-ball defender goes over the top of the ball screen.

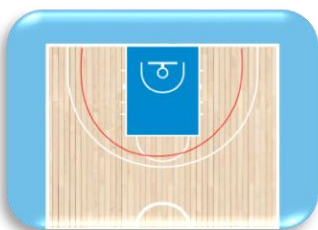


Overhead pass: See Passes.

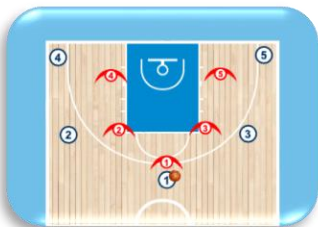
Overtime: A 5-minute extra period played when the game is tied at the end of regulation play.

P

Pack line: An imaginary line covering the perimeter areas inside of the three-point line, about 16 feet (4,8 meters) from the basket.



Pack line defense: A half-court defensive strategy in which the ball handler's defender presses the ball and the other four off-ball defenders should be within the pack line standing in the gaps between the top/wing and the wing/corner.



Paint: Also: "Lane".

Palming: Also: "Carrying the ball".

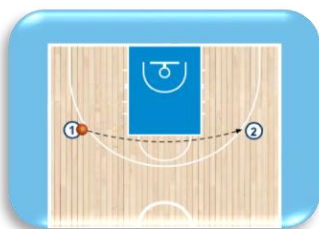
Passes:

- **Baseball pass:** A one-handed pass thrown like a baseball.
- **Behind-the-back pass:** A pass made wrapping the ball around the back.
- **Blind pig pass:** A pass thrown by the big man with two hands behind the legs or behind the back to create a backdoor action.
- **Boomerang pass:** A pass to a teammate followed by an immediate pass back so that the original ball handler has a live dribble to attack her/his defender (usually used after an on-ball screen switching defense).



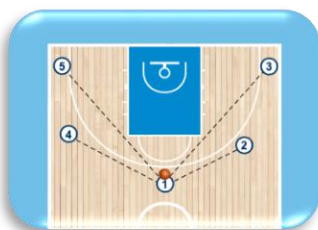
- **Bounce pass:** A pass that bounces once before reaching the receiver.
- **Chest pass:** An air pass thrown from the passer's chest to a teammate's chest. It can be a one-handed or two-handed pass.

- **Curl pass:** A low, one-handed pass made by stepping around the defender's leg and extending the throwing arm. Also: "Hook pass".
- **Flip pass:** Like a dribble hand-off action, in this case the ball handler "flip" the ball before giving it to her/his teammate.
- **Hook pass:** Also "Curl pass".
- **Off-the dribble pass:** A quick pass made with one hand off the dribble. It can be an air pass or a bounce pass.
- **Outlet pass:** An overhead pass thrown by a defender that starts the fast break.
- **Overhead pass:** A two-handed pass thrown from above the player's head.
- **Pocket pass:** A bounce pass made in a tight spot for a teammate that is moving (e.g. a pass for the big that is rolling after a ball screen action or from the low post for a player that is cutting to the basket). It's called like that because the ball handler makes the pass from the space where her/his pocket is supposed to be.
- **Push pass:** A one-handed air pass.
- **Scoop pass:** An one-hand pass made with the hand positioned under the ball, "scooping" the ball to the teammate.
- **Skip pass:** An overhead pass from one side of the court to the other over the defense.



Pass fake: Also: "Ball fake".

Passing lane: An imaginary line from the player with the ball to a teammate. If a defender is in the way, the passing lane is closed.



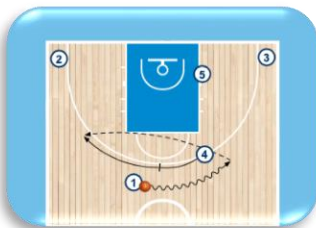
Peel switch: A defensive tactic to stop dribble penetration by having a help defender switch onto the ball handler, and then the ball handler's original defender "peels off" her/him and guards whoever is left open by the rotation.



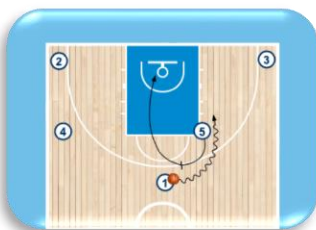
Personal foul: A penalty assessed on a player who commits an illegal action.

Pick: See [Screens](#).

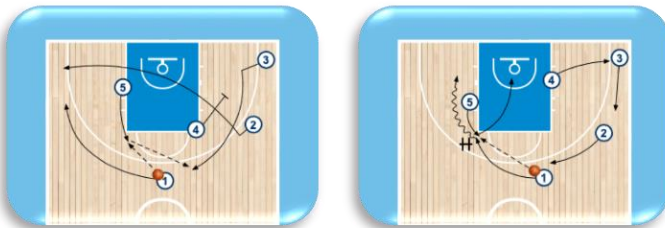
Pick-and-pop: A two-person play in which on offensive player sets a screen (pick) on the ball handler's defender and pops out to the three-points line after the ball handler drives by the screen.



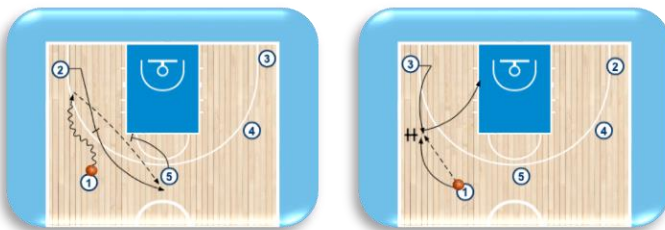
Pick-and-roll: A two-person play in which on offensive player sets a screen (pick) on the ball handler's defender and cuts (rolls) to the basket after the ball handler drives by the screen. Also: "Screen and roll".



Pinch post: An offensive alignment in which one of the two bigs (the center or the power forward), positioned near the weakside elbow, is used as a playmaking hub (with no other players in the space between the elbow and the closest sideline). In the moment she/he catches the ball, from that spot is able to make plays and create for her/his teammates, e.g. they can cut and/or go getting and handoff.



Pistol offense: A fast-paced, 5-out offense primarily featuring the ball handler on the slot/wing spot, another guard in the strong side corner and a big at the top of the key. Generally, this offensive action starts with an on-ball screen between the guards or through a DHO between the guards.



Pistol stance: When a help-side defender is guarding their man, they point one hand at their man and one hand at the ball (as if they're holding a pistol).

Pivot: The action when the player with the ball spins on one foot and steps with her/his other foot to protect the ball from a defender.

Pivot foot: The foot that the offensive player spins on while pivoting.

Player-control foul: A non-shooting offensive foul.

Player screen: See off-ball screen, see [Screens](#)

Plus-minus: See [Stats](#).

Pocket pass: See [Passes](#).

Point guard: A position played by a team's primary ball handler, the player who brings the ball up the court and begins the offense. Also: "1":

Points per possession (PPP): This value explains how efficiently a player or team uses their possessions to score points. The greater the PPP value, the greater efficiency a player or a team has at scoring points managing their possessions during a game. It's calculated dividing the points scored by a team (or by a player) and the number of team's possession (or player's possession). More details at "Possession"

Popout cut: See [Cuts](#).

Possession: It's the entry level metric to work with basketball analytics. It's possible to count an action as possession (team's possession and player's possession) when a player:

- attempts a field goal;
- misses a shot and does not get the offensive rebound;
- turns the ball over;
- goes to the line for two or three shots and either makes the last shot or does not get the rebound of a missed last shot.

The basic formula to calculate the number of possessions in a game for a team (or for a player) is:

$$0.96 * [(Field\ Goal\ Attempts) + (Turnovers) + 0.44 * (Free\ Throw\ Attempts) - (Offensive\ Rebounds)]$$

The more specific formula to calculate the number of possessions in a game for a team (or for a player) is:

$$0.5 * ((Field\ Goal\ Attempts + 0.4 * Free\ Throw\ Attempts - 1.07 * (Offensive\ Rebounds / (Offensive\ Rebounds + Opponent\ Defensive\ Rebounds)) * (Field\ Goal\ Attempts - FG) + Turnovers) + (Opponent\ Field\ Goal\ Attempts + 0.4 * (Opponent\ Free\ Throw\ Attempts) - 1.07 * (Opponent\ Offensive\ Rebounds) / (Opponent\ Offensive\ Rebounds + Defensive\ Rebounds)) * (Opponent\ Field\ Goal\ Attempts - Opponent\ FG) + Opponent\ Turnovers))$$

Post: (1) A player who plays in and around the lane area. A center or forward (a "4" or a "5"). (2) An area of the court, as in the low post or the high post.

Post moves: Back-to-the-basket scoring moves made by players near the basket.

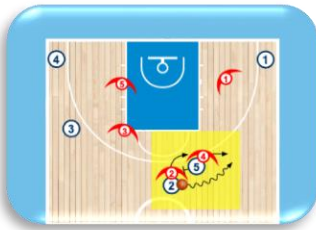
Post-up: (1) An offensive move in which an offensive player (usually a forward or a center) positions herself/himself close to the basket with her/his back toward the basket and the defender behind her/him so the offensive player can receive a pass. (2) To make that move.

Power forward: A position played by the larger of the forwards on the floor, usually a good scorer and rebounder. Also: "4".

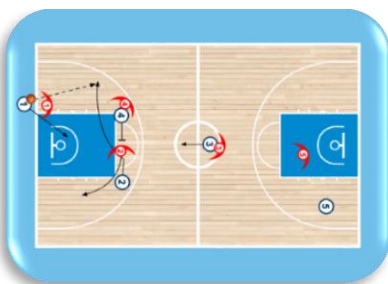
Power layup: See [Finishes](#).

Power move: Also "Power layup".

Pre-switch: An off-ball switch in anticipation of a ball screen so that a better defender is guarding in that moment the ball screener and can thus switch on the ball handler in the moment the screen occurs.



Press break: A team offense used against a press defense.



Pressure man-to-man defense: An aggressive defense where the defenders stay between their man and the ball.

Primary break: A fast break that involves only a few players from each team.

Pull up shot: See [Shots](#).

Pump fake: Also: "Shot fake".

Push down: Also: "Ice".

Push pass: See [Passes](#).

Push shot: See [Shots](#).

Putback dunk: See [Shots](#).

Putback tip-in shot: See [Shots](#).

Q

Quick hitter: A quick action used to create an open shot for a shooter or an easy basket for an offensive player.

R

RAM screen: See [Screens](#)

Ready stance: The balanced position from which a player is ready to run, jump, slide, or pivot. Her knees are bent, hands are up and out, back is straight, and head is up.

Rebound: (1) A missed shot that comes off the backboard or rim. (2) To fight for and gain control of a missed shot that comes off the backboard or rim.

Reject: A dribble move used in an on-ball screen action in which the ball handler attacks opposite to the screen side in order to beat her/his defender if she/he is too busy on defending the screen or simply creating separation with her/him before the screen occurs.



Rejection: A blocked shot. Also “Block”

Retreat step: A step in which the defender's back-foot steps toward the baseline, and the lead foot slides in place.

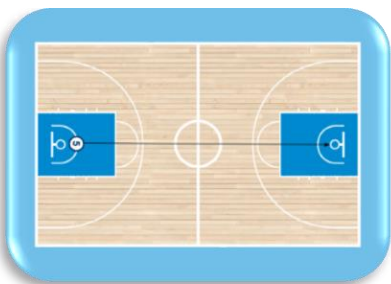
Reverse lay-up: See [Finishes](#).

Ricky screen: See [Screens](#)

Rip DHO: An offensive action in which the player that has set a back screen, receives a dribble handoff.

Rip screen: Also: “Back screen”, see [Screens](#)

Rim runner: A big who runs in fastbreak/transition from her/his defensive rim to the offensive one. Also: “Rim-Rim Run” or “Basket-Basket Cut”.



Rip through: An offensive move in which the ball handler, after catching the ball, moves it from one side to the other before the next action (dribbling, passing, shooting).

Rondo move: Also "Indiana move". See [Finishes](#).

Run and gun: An offensive system used to increase the number of shots and the pace of the game. The ball is moved from the backcourt to the front court as fast as possible and the team is used to take the first available shot.

Runner: A shot that the player shoots while running, without taking the time to set up the shot. Also: "Floater":

S

Safety: The offensive player at the top of the circle.

Sag: A tactic in which a defender leaves her/his man or zone and drops into the lane to help protect the basket.

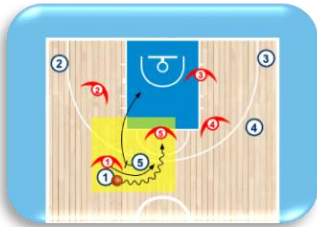
Sagging man-to-man defense: A conservative defense in which the defenders stay between her/his man and the basket.

Scoop pass: See [Passes](#)

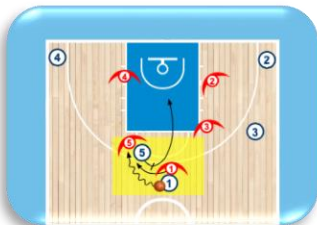
Screens: Also: "Pick".

On-ball screens:

- **Angle ball screen:** An on-ball screen action played with the ball handler positioned on the slot spot.



- **Ball screen:** Screen on a defender, who is defending the ballcarrier.



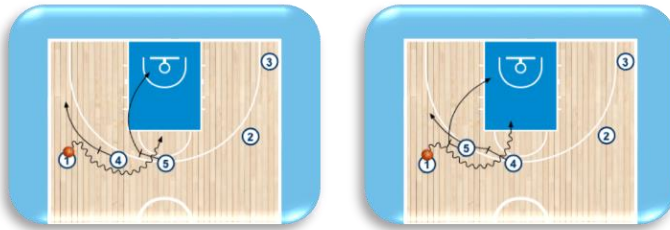
- **Butt screen:** A flat on-ball screen (typical near the top of the key) set with the screener's back to the ball handler.



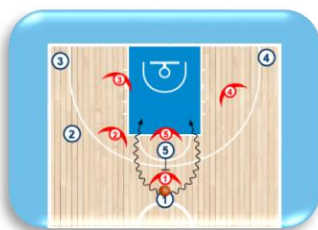
- **Drag screen:** An on-ball screen set traditionally in transition for the ball handler in order to make her/him dribble towards the middle of the court.



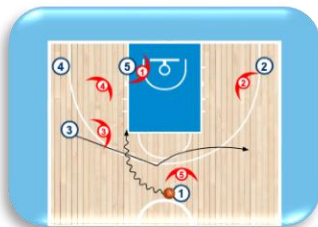
- **Double drag:** A two person staggered on-ball screen for the ball handler to dribble towards the middle of the court (drag screens are traditionally set in transition).



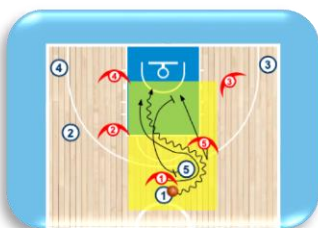
- **Flat ball screen:** An on-ball screen action played with the screener's back parallel to the baseline.



- **Ghost screen:** A screen, set for the ball handler without taking contact with her/his defender. A fake on-ball screen after which the would-be screener cuts away from the ball into an open space.



- **High ball screen:** Also "Top ball screen".
- **Hostage ball screen:** An on-ball containing screen action in which the roller set a screen for the ball handler, rolls to the basket and while the ball handler is using a hostage dribble, she/he sets another screen to her/his man in order to create a lane for the ball handler.



- **Inverted ball screen:** An on-ball screen set by a guard for a big.



- **Logo ball screen:** An on-ball screen action played with the ball handler positioned on the short-corner spot.



- **Side ball screen:** An on-ball screen action played with the ball handler positioned on the wing spot. It can be with the empty or filled ball-side corner.

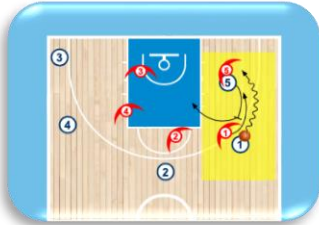


- **Slot ball screen:** Also "Angle ball screen".
- **Spain ball screen:** An on-ball screen action combined with a back-screen (the player who sets the ball screen then receives a back screen as she/he rolls to the basket).



- **Stack ball screen:** also "Spain ball screen".

- **Step-up screen:** An on-ball screen, set from a big man for the ball handler to make her/him attack to the baseline. Generally, step-up screens are set with the big man coming below the free-throw line with the screener's back parallel to the baseline. Also used when the defense plays "Ice".



- **Top ball screen:** An on-ball screen action played with the ball handler positioned on top of the key.



- **Wedge ball screen:** An on-ball screen action in which a guard sets a decoy screen action for the big man to provide an advantageous post up situation and she/he goes to set an on-ball screen for the ball handler instead of cutting to the low post.



Off-ball screens:

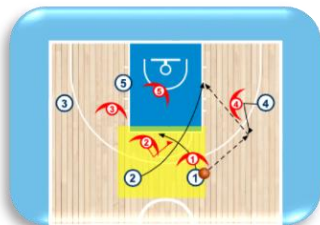
- **Back screen:** Screen in the back of the defender



- **Blade screen:** An off-ball screen action like the brush screen in which a player, instead of lifting on the perimeter during a shake action, cuts to the basket while the big man is rolling (e.g., after a side ball screen action).



- **Brush screen (or Brush cut):** An off-ball screen action in which an offensive player cuts so that she/he (and/or her/his defender) gets in the path of a different defender, acting like a screen but actually never making contact and without making a moving-screen violation.



- **Containing screen:** also "Hostage off-ball screen".
- **Cross screen:** Screen from one Lowpost position to the opposite Lowpost position.



- **Double screen:** Screen set by two players next to each other. Also: "Parallel Screen".



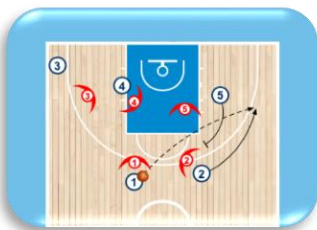
- **Down screen/ Pin Down:** Screen from the wing to the Lowpost.



- **Elevator screen:** A three person off-ball screen in which one player runs in between the two screeners, who then slide together like elevator doors in order to separate the cutter from her/his defender.



- **Flare screen:** Screen for a player moving away from the ball.



- **Hammer screen:** A weakside flare screen for a shooter to cut from the wing to cut from the wing to the corner, while the ball handler is driving baseline.



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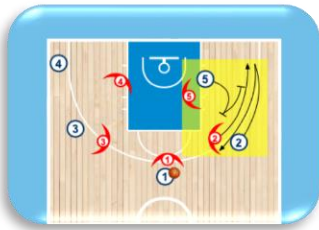
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- **Wiper screen:** A flare screen followed by a pin down or vice versa, involving the same cutter and screener.



Screener: A player who sets a screen.

Sealing the defender: After setting a screen, the screener does a reverse pivot to "seal" the defender-put the defender on her/his back.



Secondary break: A fast break that involves most of the players from each team.

Set play: A sequence of player and ball movement that has an end.

Shake action: An offensive action in which the player in the corner lifts along the perimeter towards the ball handler while she is running a side on-ball screen.



Shagger: A player who, in a drill, collects loose balls and returns them to the passer.

Shell drills: Defensive drills designed to work on all aspects of defense.



Shift to the ball: A team defensive tactic in which the off-ball defenders move toward the ball, respecting the distance between the ball and their own opponents.



Shrink the floor: A team defensive tactic in which the off-ball defenders shift closer to the ball handler, thereby closing possible driving lanes.

Shooter's roll: When a shot doesn't go through the basket cleanly, but bounces around softly before dropping through.

Shooting foul: A violation that happens when a defender fouls the shooter and the shot scores. The shooter is awarded 2 points (3 points if the shot is attempted behind the 3 point line) and a free throw.

Shooting guard: A position played by a perimeter player who is usually the team's best outside shooter. Also: "2".

Shooting hand: The hand used to shoot the ball. Also: "Guide hand".

Short corner: Positions close to the baseline usually for the bigs. Also: "Dunker spot".



- **Nowitzki shot:** A shot taken in post-up 1vs1 with the offensive player that is attacking her/his defender to win space inside: after 1, 2 dribble using the outside foot as pivot foot she/he faces up the basket and shoots the ball jumping backwards and creating separation with her/his defender. It can be made also without dribbling.
- **Pull up shot:** A shot taken from several distances from the basket in which the shooter before taking it attacks and after 1-2 dribbles picks up the ball using a jump stop.
- **Push shot:** A shot with one hand taken around the basket when an offensive player gets close to the rim but needs to finish off two feet and stop her/his drive due to a defender's positioning. The player shoots the ball from shoulder level or above.
- **Putback dunk:** When a player on the offensive team grabs an offensive rebound and then immediately slams the basketball forcefully through the hoop, with one or two hands in which the player's hand(s) hit the top of the rim.
- **Putback tip-in shot:** When a player on the offensive team grabs an offensive rebound and then immediately shoots next to the basket. This often can have the offensive player jumping and tipping the ball into the basket with one hand without coming back down onto the floor.
- **Side step shot:** A shot in which the shooter before taking it attacks and after 1-2 dribbles picks up the ball using a two-footed stop to the side creating separation from her/his defender.
- **Spot up shot:** A shot taken by a player who is waiting for the pass standing in a spot, e.g. drive&kick action with the shooter waiting in the corner or after an offensive rebound.
- **Step back shot:** A shot taken from several distances from the basket in which the shooter before taking it attacks and after 1-2 dribbles picks up the ball using a two-footed stop backwards creating separation from her/his defender.
- **Three-points shot:** A shot taken outside the three-points line.
- **Turn around jumper:** A shot by a player in the low post in which they catch the ball with their back to the basket, makes a forward pivot so they face the basket, and shoots a jump shot.

Shot clock: The clock used to limit the time allowed for a team to attempt a shot. A team has 24 seconds to attempt a shot at the basket.

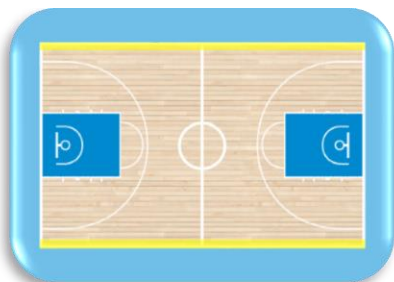
The shot clock is renewed if the ball touches the basket (shot has to be released within the first 24 seconds) or on a foul call.

Shot clock violation: A violation that occurs when the team with the ball doesn't get a shot off during the allotted time. It results in a change of possession.

Shot fake: A movement in which the player with the ball acts as if they are about to shoot. It is designed to trick the defender into straightening up, allowing the player with the ball to dribble past them. Also: "Pump fake".

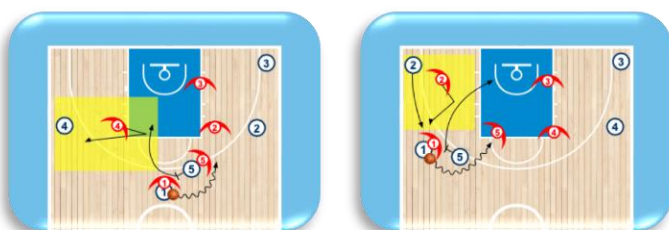
Side step shot: See Shots.

Sideline: The line at each side of the court that marks the boundary of the playing surface.



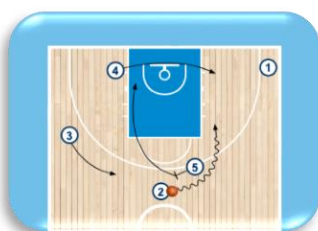
Sideline play: A play used by the offensive team to put the ball back in play from the sideline.

Single tag action: An on-ball screen action in which there is only one offensive player positioned on the ball side (it can be run like a side on-ball screen action or top on-ball screen action).



Sixth man: The first substitute who comes off the bench to replace a starter.

Slide action: A cut from the weakside dunker spot to the strong side dunker spot, while a ball screener is rolling to the vacated side of the lane.



Slip: A basket cut made by an offensive player who was supposed to set a screen.



Slot: The area on the court where the 3-point arc meets the elbow line extended.



Slot ball screen: See [Screens](#)

Skip pass: See [Passes](#)

Spain ball screen: See [Screens](#)

Speed dribble: A dribble maneuver in which the player pushes the ball ahead of her/him and bounces it at chest height.

Special plays: a play for a specific situation and/or a specific player.

Spin dribble: A dribble maneuver in which the player does a reverse pivot while bringing the ball around herself/himself so it ends up in her/his other hand.

Spin move shot: See [Finishes](#).

Split action: An action run on the ball side while an offensive player is attacking from the low post on the same side.

- **Straight Split:** The player on the wing spot, after passing the ball to her/his teammate in the low post, sets a screen for the player on the top of the key.
- **Reverse Split:** The player on the wing spot, after passing the ball to her/his teammate in the low post, receives a screen set by the player coming from the top of the key.

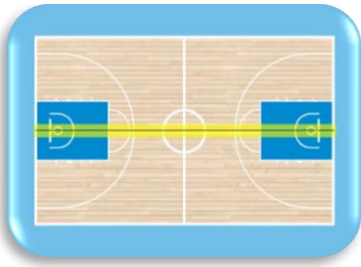
Straight Split



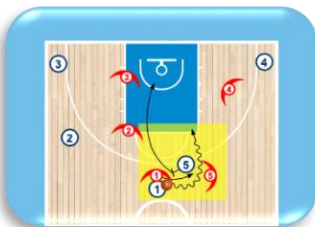
Reverse Split



Split line: The imaginary line splitting the court in two halves.



Splitting the screen: When the ball handler, seeing the screener's defender hedging, steps in between the screener and her/his defender attacking the basket.



Splitting the trap: When a trapped player steps in between the defenders to pass the ball.



Spot up shot: see [Shots](#).

Spy defense: A defensive strategy in which the pivot's defender plays in the middle of the paint, helping on all the cuts and shots at the rim in order to let the perimeter players' defenders defend with the maximum level of pressure.

Square up: To pivot so the shoulders and feet face the basket. Also: "Face up".

Stack ball screen: See [Screens](#)

Staggered screens: See [Screens](#).

Stats:

- **Assist:** A pass that leads directly to a team-mate scoring:
 - A pass to a player inside the paint, who scores from inside the paint is always considered an assist.
 - A pass to a player outside the paint, who scores without dribbling is always an assist.
 - A pass to a player outside the paint, who scores after one or more dribbles, is considered an assist if the shooter does not need to beat her/his defender. We don't award an assist if the shooter beats her/his defender in a 1vs1 situation who is facing her/him and is located directly in front of her/him, between her/him and the basket. Helpside defenders are not relevant in this sense. An assist is still given in situations when the offensive player is driving by her/his defender in a 1vs1 situation if she/he drives to the basket immediately after receiving the pass and her/his defender is caught off-balance.

The same principle applies in fast-break situations, with a pass to a player at half-court.

- **Blocked shots:** A blocked shot is awarded to a player any time she/he appreciably makes contact with the ball to alter the flight of a FGA and the shot is missed. It recognizes a clear rejection or deflection of a shot by a defensive player. The ball may or may not have left the hand of the shooter for the block to be counted.
- **Double-double:** Double-digit figures for a player in two positive statistical categories, (e.g. 10 points and 10 assists).
- **Plus-minus:** A value that keeps track of the net changes in the score when a given player is either on or off the court.

Formula: Plus-Minus for Any Player = (team points scored while that Player is on the court) – (team points allowed while that player is on the court).

- **Steal:** A steal is awarded to a defensive player when her/his action causes a turnover by an opponent. A steal must always include touching the ball but does not necessarily have to be controlled.
 - Intercepting or deflecting a pass;
 - Taking the ball away from an opponent holding or dribbling the ball;
 - Picking up a loose ball after a mistake of an offensive player.

No steal is charged if the ball becomes dead and the defensive team is awarded possession of the ball out of bounds - even if the turnover was caused by the action of the defensive player.

- **Triple-double:** Double-digit figures for a player in three positive statistical categories (e.g. 10 points, 10 rebounds, and 10 assists).

- **Turnover:** A turnover is a mistake by an offensive player or team that results in the defensive team gaining possession of the ball, including:
 - A bad pass;
 - Ball handling or fumbling;
 - Any kind of violation or offensive foul.

A turnover can only be committed by the team in control of the ball.

Steal: See [Stats](#).

Step back shot: See [Shots](#).

Step up screen: See [Screens](#).

Stop-and-go dribble: Also: "Hesitation dribble".

Stop and pop: An offensive move in which a player comes to a sudden stop, picks up her/his dribble, and shoots the ball.

Stride stop fake: Also "Indiana move".

Stunt: A defensive move in which an off-ball defender guarding a player in front of the ball handler in the moment of a penetration makes a fake help and recovers to her/his opponent in order to slow down the penetration.



Strong side: Also: "Ball side". The opposite of "Weak side".

Substitute: A player who comes in the game to replace another player. Also: "Sub".

Swing step: A defensive step in which the defender does a reverse pivot with one foot and stays in her/his on-ball stance.

Switch: A movement in which two defenders change the offensive player each is playing.



T

Tag: A defensive tactic in which one off the ball defender “bumps” (hits) the roller after an on-ball screen action in order to avoid she/he rolls deep to the basket.



Teardrop: Also “Floater”.

Technical foul: A violation, such as a player or coach using profanity, that results in the other team getting one free throw. Also: “T”.

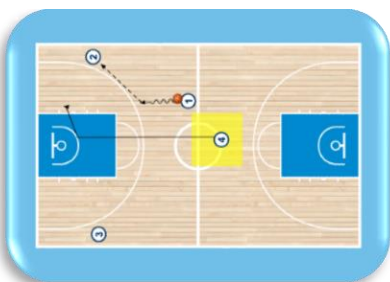
Three-and-D player: A player who is specialized in three-points shooting and defense.

Three-points shot: See [Shots](#).

Tip-off: The opening jump ball at the center circle that begins a game.

Top ball screen: See [Screens](#)

Trailer: An offensive player, usually a center or a power forward, who trails the first wave of players on the fast break.



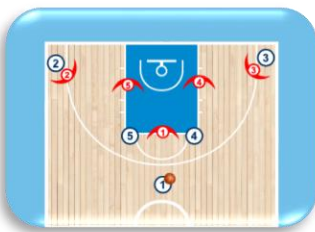
Transition: A movement that occurs when a team changes from offense to defense (defensive transition) or from defense to offense (offensive transition).

Trap: A defensive move in which two defenders guard the player with the ball by forming a V with their bodies.



Traveling: A violation that occurs when the player with the ball takes too many steps without dribbling.

Triangle-and-two: A combination defense in which three defenders play zone in a triangle formation and two defenders guard specific players man-to-man.



Triple-double: See [Stats](#).

Triple switch: An on-ball screen defense in which the screener's defender and the ball handler's defender switch and after that a second switching action occurs between the new screener's defender and another defender to avoid a mismatch situation.



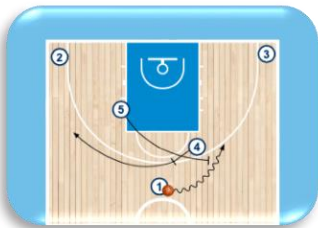
Triple threat position: The bent knees stance that allows the player three options: dribble, pass, or shoot.

Turnaround jump shot: See [Shots](#).

Turnover: See [Stats](#).

Twirl screen: See [Screens](#)

Twist action: An on-ball screen action in which the ball handler uses two different on ball screens set by two different players, with the second screen set in the opposite direction of the first one.



Two-for-one: Two quick offensive actions used one next to the other when there is less than one minute on the shot clock.

Two-guard offense: A team offense mostly used against zones with one-guard fronts (1-2-2 and 1-3-1).



Two-shot foul: A violation that occurs when a defender fouls the shooter (inside the three point line), and the shot misses. The shooter is awarded two free throws.

Two way player: A player who has the ability to play and be effective both on offense and defense.

U

UCLA screen: See [Screens](#)

Unsportsmanlike foul: A foul that occurs when a player makes illegal contact with an opposing player without intending to get the ball.

Up-and-under move: See [Finishes](#).

Up screen: See UCLA Screen, see [Screens](#)

V

V-cut: See [Cuts](#).

Veer screen: See [Screens](#)

W

Weak defense: A on-ball screen coverage in which the on-ball defender forces the ball handler to her weak hand.



Weak side: Also: "Help side".

Weak side action: An action run on the weak side while an offensive player is attacking from the low post on the ball side. It can be made by cuts and/or screens.



Wedge ball screen: See [Screens](#)

Wide screen: See [Screens](#)

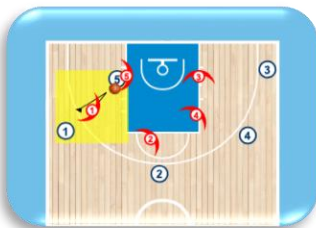
Wing: (1) The area on the court where the 3-point arc meets the free throw line extended. (2) The offensive player who plays in that area.



Wiper screen: See [Screens](#)

Y

Yo-Yo defense: A defensive tactic in which the off the ball defender, when the ball is in the low post, bothers the post player dribble hitting the ball and getting back to her/his opponent, like the yo-yo toy.

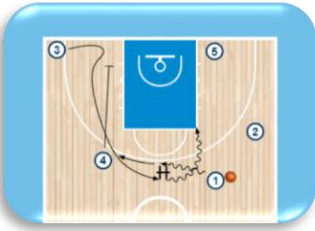


Z

Zipper: A down screen for a player on the strong side (or weak side) low block to cut to the slot where she/he is supposed to catch the ball.



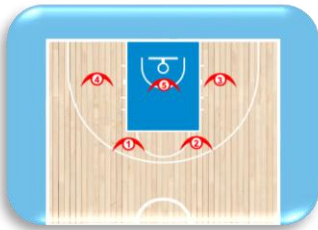
Zoom Action: Offensive Action where a pin down is followed by a hand off action.



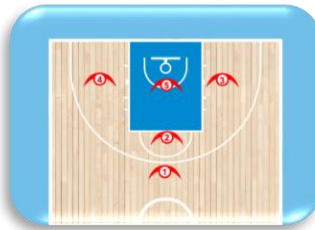
Zone defense: A team defense in which players are assigned to guard specific areas of the court, rather than players.

Most popular zone alignments:

2-3



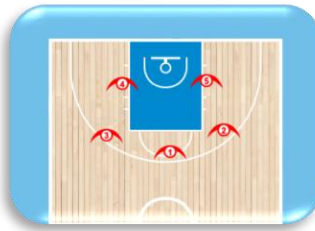
1-1-3



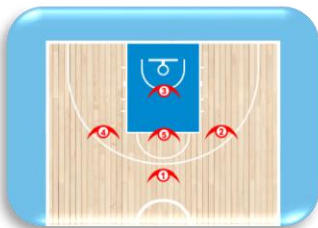
2-1-2



3-2



1-3-1



Zone offense: A team offense used against a zone defense.

Zone press defense: Full court zone defense, mostly used to trap the ball.

Most popular alignments:

1-3-1



1-2-2



1-2-1-1 (diamond)



2-2-1



References:

FIBA Stats Manual 2018 at FIBA.basketball:

https://www.fiba.basketball/documents/2015/FIBA_Stats_Manual20120920.pdf

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