

Teaching a defensive switch

A switch should disrupt the offense without conceding an easy mismatch. Duran builds the habits from isolated small-on-big and big-on-small defense before adding screens and help.

Translated and restructured from Minut ACEB 34 · June 2019, pp. 3-6 · Carles Duran. Original: Defensa de canvis

Original page 3 · Why switch, and Exercise 1: mismatches in 1v1

Purpose

A defensive switch is technically and tactically demanding. When executed well it interrupts the attacking team's rhythm and makes the defense more active than the offense. The switch happens when defenders exchange assignments on a screen. This teaching progression begins with 1v1 and eventually reaches 5v5.

Exercise 1 · 1v1 with passers

Pair perimeter and interior players. Use two passers and two simultaneous 1v1 matchups: an interior attacker against a smaller perimeter defender on the low post, and a perimeter attacker against a bigger interior defender outside. These are the mismatches a switch can create. Once the attacker receives the ball, allow at most three dribbles. Play continuously, stopping when the coach needs to correct a detail. Start by analysing the attacking player's strengths rather than assuming that the physical mismatch decides the play.

Technique in the mismatch

When the smaller player guards the low post, stay behind the post attacker, use quick feet and avoid the contact the bigger player seeks. Once the catch is made, close in and disturb the ball with active hands. If the bigger attacker fronts initially, the aim is still to recover behind on the catch. When the bigger defender guards a perimeter player, allow enough space to contain the quicker opponent, use length to take away space and contest the shot, and keep one foot slightly ahead rather than standing square.

TACTICAL DIAGRAMS · SOURCE PAGE 3

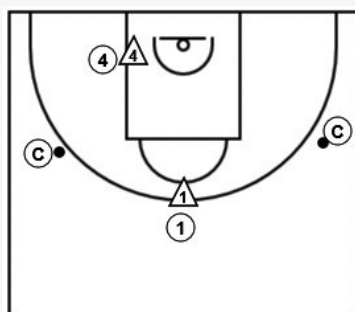


Diagram 1 · p. 3

Original page 4 · Exercises 2-4: from the post to screened actions

Exercise 2 · 2v2 on a quarter court

Play with a perimeter attacker and an interior attacker at the low post. The defender of the passer must pressure the passing lane, raise both arms and prevent an easy high entry. A bounce pass travels more slowly and comes at a height the smaller defender can challenge; an overhead pass is far harder for that defender to stop. Emphasise the post 1v1 as well as ball pressure. A variation uses two perimeter defenders.

Exercise 3 · an off-ball screen for a shooter

Play 2v2 with a passer, applying the two earlier situations. The interior player screens to release a perimeter shooter. The passer cannot join the attack after making the pass. Defenders switch. The shooter should not catch close to the three-point line, and the screener must not roll freely. If an interior defender ends up on the shooter, make the subsequent pass to the post difficult, especially the high pass. Rotate offense and defense; the coach may keep a defensive pair on court while the offense keeps scoring.

Exercise 4 · ball-screen switch

Play 2v2 on a ball screen with a neutral passer and a prescribed starting movement. The interior screener rolls toward the basket. The passer may help at any time but, after receiving the ball, can only pass it once. The defensive call is SWITCH. The original ball defender remains aggressive and in front of the ball, concentrating first on the 1v1 rather than waiting for the exchange. As a variation, the coach can require a pass to the neutral passer when the guard comes off the screen. The rolling interior player sinks below the basket, then fights to receive at the low post. Rotate roles after a score or according to the coach's criterion. Add a defender to the passer and play 3v3 to develop the same actions.

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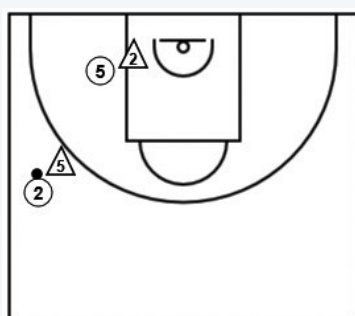


Diagram 1 · p. 4

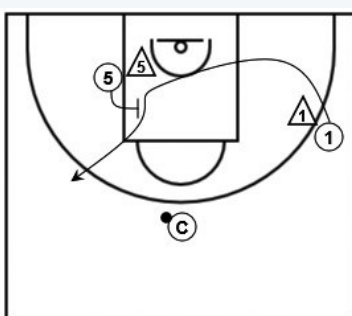


Diagram 2 · p. 4

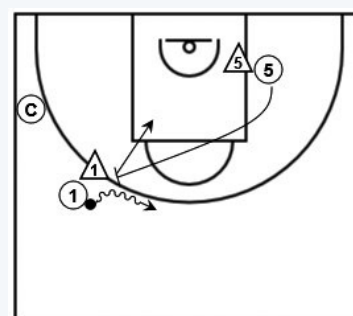


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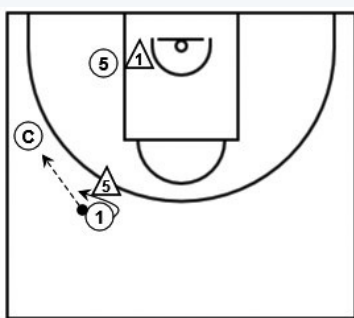


Diagram 4 · p. 4

Original page 5 · Exercise 5: 4v4, switches and traps

The two trap triggers

In 4v4 introduce a 2v1 trap in two situations: after a switch, an interior defender traps when the ball is entered to the low post; or, when an outside player attacks the switched defender in 1v1, the nearest perimeter defender joins to trap the ball. The coach gives the offense specific options so each defensive response can be practised.

Initial action and communication

Set the offense in a 1-3 alignment. Player 2 moves toward one side and uses an off-ball screen to come out for a shot. The interior player who does not screen opens out; the screener rolls to the basket. Defenders 2 and 5 switch. Everyone must hear the call, not just the two players involved. Even while training the switch, the first task remains strong 1v1 defense.

Trap the perimeter isolation

After the switch, give the outside attacker room to isolate. The nearest outside defender jumps to trap with the switched defender. Maintain the two-player trap until the ball is passed. Then the interior defender leaves and the outside defender stays with the ball handler. Do not drive the attacker toward the middle just to force a trap: if the ball can be guided to the baseline, that may be the better first solution. Defend the ball before anticipating the trap.

Trap the low-post entry

Another option lets the outside player receive and pass into the low post to the player who set the screen. The open interior defender then joins the trap. The timing matters: the low-post pass should not come from the outside attacker now guarded by an interior defender, otherwise that defender's position makes the planned trap unsuitable. Practise the ball movement and the recovery shown in the diagrams.

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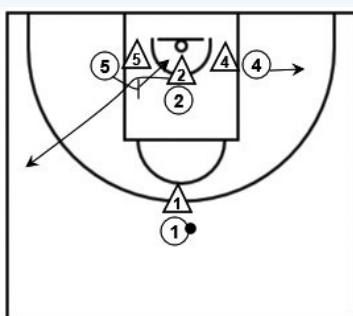


Diagram 1 · p. 5

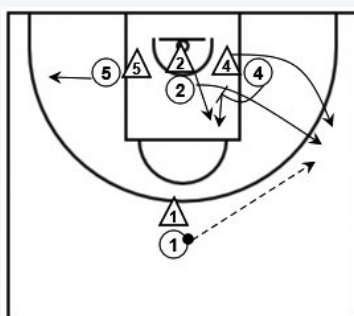


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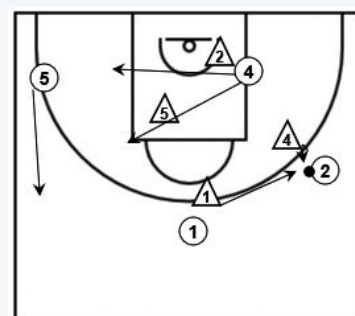


Diagram 3 · p. 5



Diagram 4 · p. 5

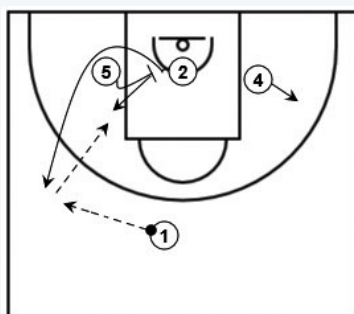


Diagram 5 · p. 5

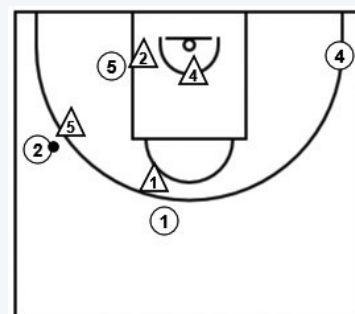


Diagram 6 · p. 5

Original page 6 · Recovery and the final 5v5 progression

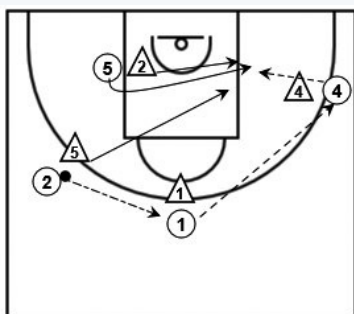
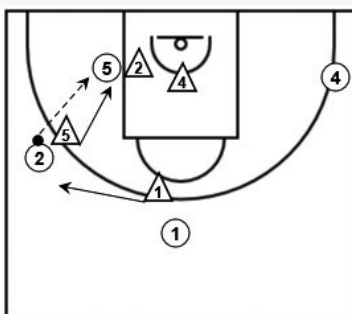
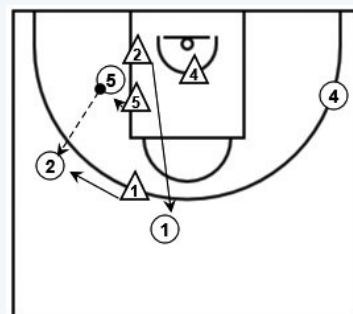
Rotation after the trap

A trap can also be considered when the entry comes from a passer guarded by an interior player. This is not the ideal option, but it may be viable. Know the shooting ability of player 2: the better the shooter, the faster the rotation must be. Defender 1 closes out to player 2, and after the 2v1 ends defender 2 rotates to outside player 1. The perimeter defenders rotate together. On recovery from a trap, the interior defender leaves the two-player pressure and recovers to the outside assignment.

5v5

Finally give the offense different options in 5v5 so the defense can rehearse several switch responses. Begin with one interior attacker at the high post and another at the low post. The coach should direct the attack's movements, ideally reflecting what an upcoming opponent actually runs. Keep reminding the defense that 1v1 comes first: excellent individual defense may remove the need to switch at all.

TACTICAL DIAGRAMS · SOURCE PAGE 6

**Diagram 1 · p. 6****Diagram 2 · p. 6****Diagram 3 · p. 6**

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