

# Transition Basketball

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When building a running team speed, spacing and timing are essential.

First the players by position for the ideal fast break team.

- 1) Point guard as in many areas of basketball is key.
  - A) Making himself open and ready for the outlet can make the difference between a lay up or contested jump shot at the other end.
  - B) Court vision. Ball always moves faster through the air than it does with the dribble. A point guard that quickly sees his teammates has an opportunity to quickly advance the ball.
  - C) Unselfish attitude. If the other players know that if they are open they have a "pass first point" point guard they will run the lanes harder.
  - D) Basketball IQ. A strong floor general has to know the strengths and weaknesses of each player on his team. Do they have good hands? Can they catch the ball with speed and under control? Are they good finishers? Where and when should they have the ball?
  - E) Speed Dribble. If there is no one open when the point guard first receives the ball he must be able to advance the ball quickly from back to front court.
- 2) Wings
  - A) Getting out and filling lanes is a must. If the wings are slow the fast break will suffer.
  - B) Strong finishers to the basket.
  - C) Decision making. Knowing when to attack the rim or pull wide leaving the trailer lane for the bigs.
- 3) Big Men
  - A) Rebounds with quick outlets trigger the fast break
  - B) Running the court and beating the other big men to the other end leads to easy points
  - C) A trailing high post jump shot is a big plus

Team defense and how aggressive it is can determine the success of a team that wishes to run. Ball pressure and denial of passing lanes can lead to deflections and loose balls which can be the start of break.

Advantage of a running team....An opposing team can use many half court tactics to slow down and confuse an opponent. Zones can slow down a team that has an inside dominate game or has speed and quickness to slash to the basket. Tight man to man will make it difficult for 3 point shooters. Double teams against certain players will get the ball out of scorers hands. But if you run the break, your offense is able to attack before the defense gets set.

The offensive teams and players always run harder and are more aggressive in the open court than the defensive team. With an opportunity to score you will see more speed coming from the team with the ball rather than than opponents.

Most importantly...players like to run...its fun.

## **The Defense**

Aggressive man defense, playing passing lanes with ball pressure get a team in a attack mode and has them mentally ready to run once they get the ball. In addition this defensive mind set leads to opposing team's turnovers that start the break.

It is not only aggressive man defense that can start the break but also many coaches prefer zone defenses. In a zone the defenders are lined up and ready to run. Almost as if they are in the starting blocks. When the shot is missed the break is much easier to structure from a zone. The wings are often lined up to fill the lanes from their positions in the defense. The point guard is in place to get the out let pass and big men are under the basket to rebound. Zones often force teams to attack with perimeter jump shots that lead to long rebounds that are ideal for the running game.

## **The Outlet**

The success of the running game is often dictated by the trigger or outlet pass. Big men that can rebound and get the ball in the hands of their quarterbacks as quickly as possible are invaluable to the running team. Transition from back court to front court will dictate the success of the break.

## **The Push**

Finding an open space to make oneself clear for a clean, quick outlet pass from the rebounder must always be in the mindset of a true floor general.

Once the point guard has the ball his decision making is crucial. Bigger point guards have the advantage of seeing over defenders while smaller guards can use their speed to create open passing lanes. Who ever can find teammates quicker will be the most effective. When that pass is not available the ball handler must be able to advance the ball using a speed dribble. If the guard needs to many dribble to get the ball from back court to front it will slow the break. A speed dribble usually covers a lot of court and the ball can be advanced in a short amount of time.

## **The Lanes**

Quick wings that love to run must get wide to open the court and make clear passing lanes. If this spacing is not done properly the point guard will not be able to have vision or a passing lane to his wings. Also by staying wide you spread the defenders and leave the middle of the court for the point guard and the big men filling lanes.

## **The Trailers**

Big men with speed are key. If the defense recovers to stop the wings it usually opens the middle lanes for the big guys. A first trailer must run to the rim and can get easy high percentage shots if he is determined. If he is covered the last trailer is often open at the top of key. A high post jump shot in the arsenal of a big man can lead to many uncontested looks.

## **The Decision**

In the end the success of the break will be in the hands of the point guard and his decision making. If he distributes the ball and keeps all his teammates involved they will continue to

run the lanes and play with the energy and intensity needed to use effective transition basketball. If the point guard is turnover prone or selfish do not expect his teammates to do what is needed to play this style of basketball.

Teams running on offense will always do so with more energy and conviction than the opponent that has to play transition defense. It is just a fact that it is more energizing to run with the ball than to stop the other guys from doing the same. It is like playing on a hill. For the offense the basket is at the bottom of the hill while for the defenders it is on the top.

There are multiple secondary breaks that can be used depending on the strengths and weaknesses of your team. Much easier to find the match up you are looking for out of a fast break situation before the opponents can recover and set their defenses.

If you are more comfortable using 2 guards for outlets or 1, if you have big men that can handle the ball and take a dribble out before making the first pass or if you have multiple ball handlers capable to push the ball the most important factor to successfully running with the ball is transition from back to front court, speed and sharing the ball.

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