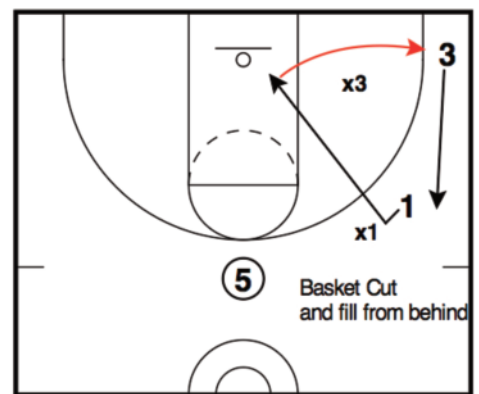


ATTACKING VS PRESSURE DEFENSE

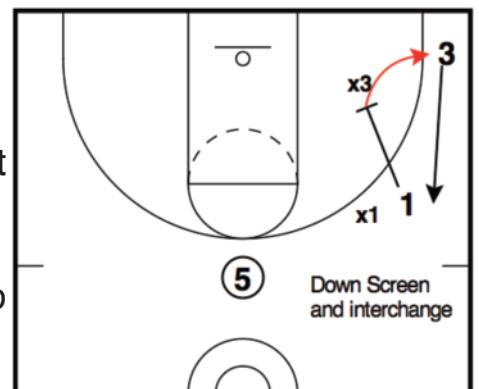
When playing against defenses that are designed to deny and disrupt the offense, we want to build in some techniques and strategies to help alleviate the pressure and make that pressure work against the defense. Being a 5-out offense, the basket is open and spacing is built in to attack pressure in a variety of ways. Using a spread offense and a system that always has a cutter going to the rim is a good start to attack pressure and denials. With the defense denying, we are more likely to be open, and not have help, if we make a successful cut to the rim, whether it be a butt cut, back cut, or slip. We are also more likely to be able to get to the rim attacking closeouts off the dribble as the defense is trying to get to denial position instead of help, so we want to explore attacking out of the penetration spots within the offense.

Rule #1 - If denied, don't stand or seal, just basket cut or down screen

With the offense being interchangeable, we don't need a certain player in a certain spot at any given time. We can run the offense with any player in any spot. Sure, we would prefer to have certain players in certain spots, but it is merely a preference. When players are denied on the wing, they have the option to basket cut or down screen. These options don't take us out of what we are doing, the players just trade places. With a basket cut, the player in corner would fill to the wing. Most defenses can't or don't deny two passes away, so on the basket cut, the player in the corner is in a foot race to get to the wing with a defender that should be going from help to deny. After the basket cut, the cutter should fill to the corner, replacing the player that just lifted to the wing.



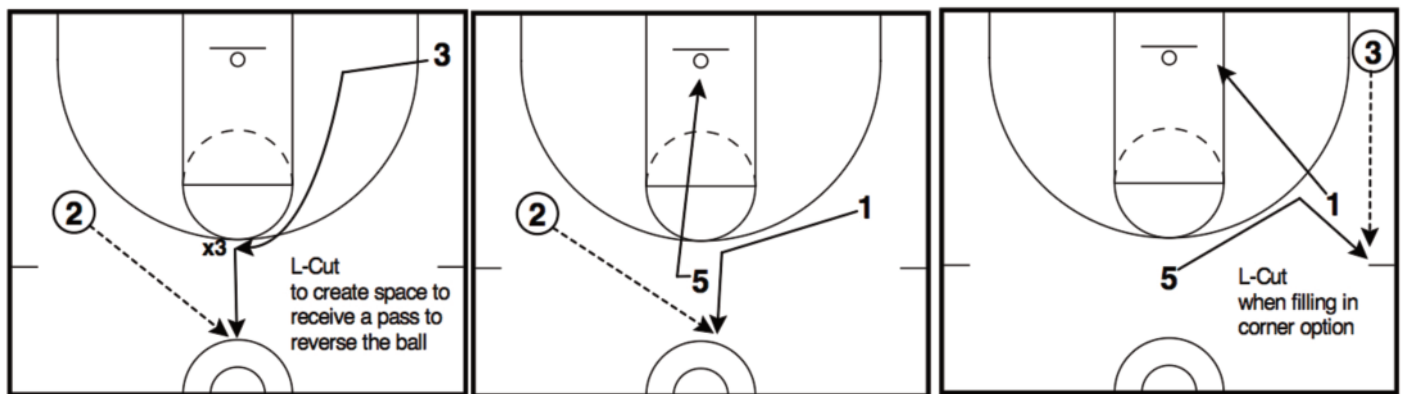
The second option is to down screen for the player in the corner. Against teams that fight through screens, this should be especially effective. After screening down, the player simply replaces the player he screened for. Against switching defenses, the down screener wants to try to screen his own defender while on the way down to screen for his teammate in the corner, essentially trying to stop his defender from jump switching into another wing denial. An important note on this: players should only basket cut or down screen when the passer is looking at them and are not open. We want the passer to be able to see and read the action as it unfolds so that he can pass on time and on target. If the passer is reading one side of the court, the players on the other side of the court should hold. If the basket cut or down screen action doesn't pro-



duce an open player on one side of the court, the passer should pivot to read the other side of the court.

Rule #2 - Use L-cuts when filling

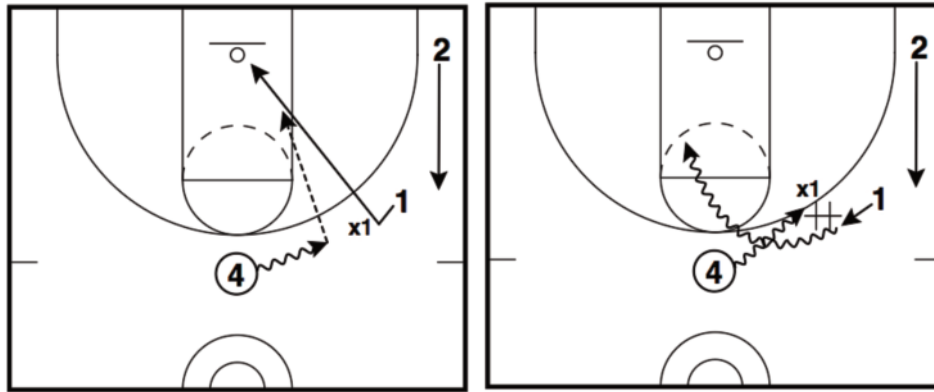
If a pass is going to be contested within the offense, particularly at the top of the key or on the wing, we want to use L-cuts to create more space to be open. An L-cut is a simple cut - it's a sharp cut off of the inside foot to pop out, the same cut we use to pop to the top of the key as the butt cutter in the offense. This cut can happen at various points within the offense as a weapon to get open. If the long cutter gets to the top of the key and is denied, he can freely L-cut towards half court to create space to reverse the ball. If the ball is on the wing and the player at the top of the key has used a basket cut against the defense, the player on the opposite wing should fill using an L-cut to get open. On our corner option, we fill from the top of the key to the wing using an L-cut. The L-cut provides extra separation and an opportunity pass away from the defense which should lead to safer passing.



Rule #3 - When dribbled at, go backdoor, and fill from behind with an L-cut

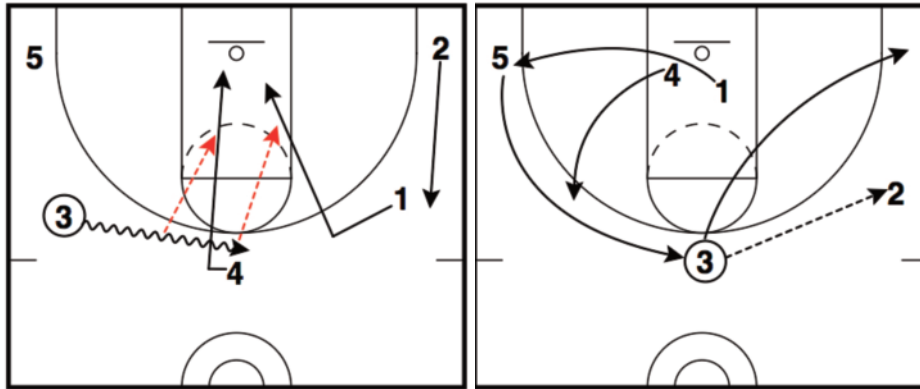
Another way to attack pressure is to dribble at the player on the wing from the top of the key. This is a slow crab dribble, keeping the ball protected. In theory, this could be used as an option read to either accept a dribble hand off or cut back door, but we never progressed to the point of using it in a true read and react concept to hand off, but I think it could be a great option. The teaching would be a read line based on the defender coming to the ball: backdoor if the defender is on the line, and DHO if the defender is in the gap.

Off the crab dribble, the ball handler should be able to throw a pocket pass if the backdoor cutter is open, all while being able to see in his peripheral vision the next player who should be filling up behind the backdoor cut. If the pass is completed to the backdoor cutter, we likely have a layup. At a minimum, the backdoor cut should loosen up the defense to allow the cutter filling behind a better chance to be open. If we hit the cutter filling behind, we would cut underneath of the ball to fill, while the backdoor cutter would fill out to the weak side.



Using a dribble clear out

A dribble clear out is a technique used from the wing to flatten the defense and create a lot of movement for the defense to defend. From the wing, the ball handler will dribble at the player at the top of the key, forcing him to go backdoor. He will continue his dribble towards the player on the opposite wing, who will also set his man to go backdoor. If either of the opportunities create a backdoor layup opportunity, we should take advantage of that. The player in the corner will now lift up the sideline to receive the pass. This technique creates backdoor opportunities and has a safe place to release the ball to, since the corner defender should be in help side and is has his attention drawn by the backdoor cuts. If neither backdoor is there, we hit the player in the corner lifting to the wing, and the passer fills the strong side corner.



Using sets within the offense for designed backdoors

As described in the chapter on set plays from within this offense, there are a few good options for backdoor plays to capitalize on defenses that deny in the passing lane. Please refer to that chapter for the specific plays.

ATTACKING VS SAGGING DEFENSE

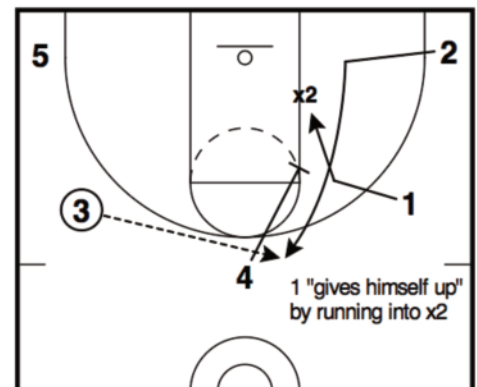
The Circle Motion can be used effectively against various styles of man to man defense, but we've found different styles of defense tend to produce different kinds of shots. Against denial styles of defense, we tend to get more shot attempts at the rim - open cutters to the basket, backdoors, and penetration. Against sagging styles of defense, we tend to get more jump shots, specifically the shot at the top of the key and the skip pass to the down screener vacating to the weak side wing. With that in mind, let's look at some thoughts on using the Circle Motion when attacking a sagging defense.

Be patient

Sagging, gap style of defenses are more about outlasting the other team than providing pressure to get steals or disrupt the offense. As an offense, we need to understand and accept that. Therefore, we need not be in a rush. We need to be willing to work the ball from side to side to find a good option. Considering we aren't at risk of a forced turnover against these styles of defenses, we need to be willing to wait for a break down in the defense to exploit instead of forcing the issue.

Give yourself up as a cutter

Against sagging defenses, they are going to have bodies in the paint protecting the basket. There are ways, whether by design or accident, that contribute to the defense being congested to the point where it's hard to stay with cutters or closeout. For example, if a butt cutter makes a back cut before curling off the down screen he may be able to run in the path of, or even run into, the defender of the player making the long cut. This increases the chances of the long cutter being open but less likely the back cut will be there. This is an example of playing unselfish and giving yourself up as a cutter to better the chances of someone else getting open.



ATTACKING VS SWITCHING DEFENSE

Over the years we've found this offense to be effective against defenses that switch off the ball screens. The three player bunch action requires great communication by the defense to switch correctly, especially if the offense is varying their cuts on each reversal.

Slip the down screen

Slipping the down screen can really work well against switches. Teams are usually switching the down screeners defender onto the long cutter, to jump out and deny at the top of the key. We teach that when the down screener's defender gets above the down screener, we want to slip to the basket. There is usually a tight window to slip into in between the long cutter's defender and the butt cutter's defender. We want to snap our head and show our hands right into this space between the two defenders. This pass requires anticipation from the passer, so he needs to make his read and throw an accurate pass.

Back cut the butt cut

Back cutting the butt cut can cause confusion to the defense if they are anticipating the to switch the butt cut. If they are anticipating a screen taking place, and no screen happens, they will have to sort it out in a split second, leading to confusion. On the back cut, sometimes both defenders will go with the back cutter, sometimes leaving the long cutter open at the top of the key. The defense is going to want to make sure the cutter to the basket is taken away because that player can shoot a high percentage shot close to the rim. The defense will tend to overreact to the cutter to the rim if there is confusion.