

4. HOW TO SET A BALL SCREEN

Sprint to the Screen This helps the ball screener's defender arrive later to defend the screen and to take his momentum away from the basket when defending a 2-man action. Also, the quicker the screen arrives, the less thinking time the defense has to decide and communicate how they are going to defend it.

Jump Stop to Screen This allows the guard to see clearly how he needs to set up his defender to use the screen effectively and helps us set consistent legal screens.

Accuracy - Aim For Defender's Hip We want to screen the defender squarely on his hip - just a good, solid (and legal) screen. There are different methods of teaching at various levels of basketball on screening the top or bottom of the hip, but at the high school level we don't need to be that precise.

Make Only MINOR Adjustments to the Screen After the jump stop, only very minimal movement should be made to line up the defender we are trying to screen. We call this a "measure." In the high school game we need to get set early and allow the ball handler to use the screen. There can be NO movement (or even shifting weight) by the screener while contact is being made on the screen. Because we make a concerted effort to set legal ball screens, we have very few illegal screens called on us despite setting a ton of ball screens.

Screen Spacing We DO NOT jump stop right on top of the defender as a screener. Give 2-3 feet of space which allows us to make minor adjustments to the level of the screen as the action is developing. We can close the gap after we've made our jump stop. With our adjustments we want to make sure we are not drawing an illegal screen foul by moving when the contact occurs. We also want to set our screens closer to the sideline to create more space to the middle. We have a line on our court which the kids try to screen near to make sure our spacing is wide. I would recommend 5-6 feet away from the sideline. I cannot emphasize enough how important spacing is in our 2-man games, and this key is where it all begins.

Wide Screens This also cannot be emphasized enough! We want a wide base when setting the screen to make the screen harder to get around. We want our screener's feet to be wider than his shoulders. Teaching low and wide screens is a way to gain another small advantage that over time turns into a big advantage. Don't let your players be tall and skinny when ball screening. It is rarely called, but I love when the officials warn us that our ball screens are too wide.

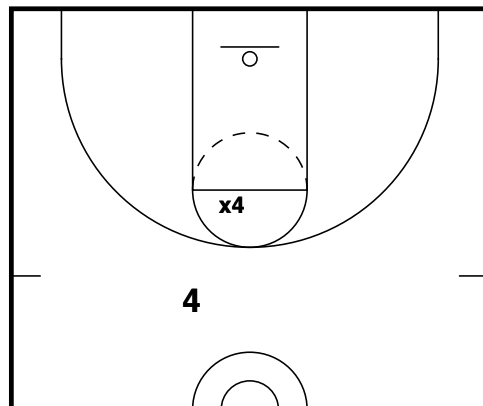
Use Arms to Protect Yourself As the screener, you cannot raise your arms, extend your arms or shift your weight during the screen. Keep the arms tight to the body (especially the reproductive organ) for legality and protection.

Hold the Screen Through the Contact Once contact is made, position should be held until the defender gets through the screen. It is common for post players to want to roll early but we want to hold the screen to continue to give our guards more time to attack. However, if a switch is made, that is a great time to begin a roll and add a seal to take advantage of a possible mismatch.

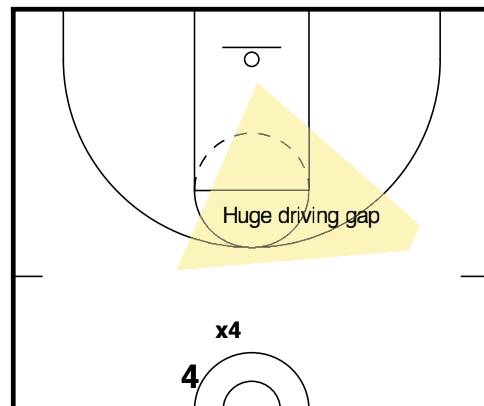
5. GETTING OPEN - REVERSAL MAN & BOTTOM PAIRED GUARD

With this offense we strive for continual ball movement and the ability to have multiple ball reversals. There are a few critical points when the offense can get held up due to players not being able to get open to receive critical passes to keep the offense flowing. Here we describe the thought process of the two critical points of keeping the ball moving in our offense.

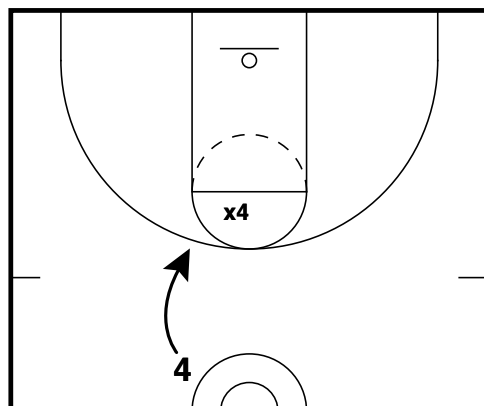
Reversal Man Our general thought process here is that we would rather be safe than sorry. We always want the reversal man to be available to receive a pass and he should stay behind the ball. If he is surely available, the guard using the ball screen can be aggressive because he knows he has a safe place to throw the ball if he gets stuck. There will be catch and shoot opportunities for the reversal man to step into if he plays it right, but these shots are secondary to being available and getting the ball reversed. We generally tell the reversal man to stand at the seam, 4-5 feet behind the 3-point line as a starting point. This allows them to be able to step into a shot as a play develops but also be available to receive a reversal pass.



If we are playing a team that denies one pass away, we may have our reversal man line up all the way out at half court. This makes the defender make a decision on how bad he really wants to deny. If he denies all the way to half court, we have a HUGE gap to penetrate off the ball screen. If he sinks back in towards a position to where he can help on the ball screen, the reversal man should creep with him towards the 3-point line but always staying available to receive a pass.



A small cut may need to be made to make sure the reversal pass is available. This is ALWAYS preferred to standing still and allowing a defender to possibly run this passing lane for a steal. We will always sacrifice scoring position from the reversal spot to make sure we have a safe pass. It is truly an art that requires a high basketball IQ and a lot of reps to be able to balance all these factors to always be available to receive a reversal pass.



Bottom Paired Guard The primary way we get the ball from the reversal forward to the sideline is a lift. We cannot emphasize enough how critical the lift is for both shot creation and keeping the ball moving so the offense can flow.

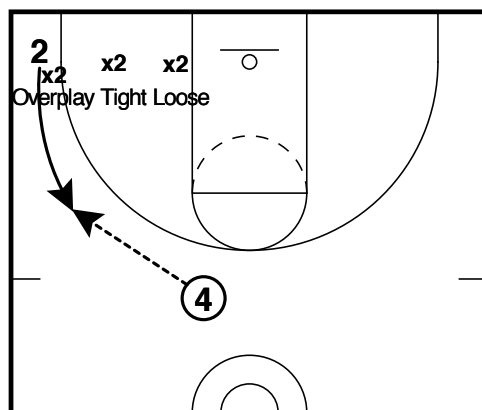
The bottom paired guard needs to be patient and wait deep in the corner. There are catch and shoot opportunities in the corner but beyond that, they should be watching and reading the play to time their lift perfectly (can't leave too soon). We must be patient and allow for the top paired guard to begin his cut or screen and then lift right behind them. A good teaching point on when to start the lift is when the reversal forward turns his toes towards the wing as a passer. If the toes aren't pointed at you, stay put. Also, if the opposite forward had elected to roll and seal in the paint, a good pass fake to him will hold the bottom paired defender's man for an extra second to aid the effectiveness of our lift.

To lift, we want to take 2-3 sprint steps up from the corner to the wing and then catch the ball on two feet, ready to shoot or attack off the bounce. A great lift requires patience to make the hard cut at the right time. It is better to be a tad late than early. We want to lift wider to sideline and we can always curl slightly at the end of the cut if we believe we will have a shot on the catch. Once we catch the ball, the reversal man should follow the pass to initiate a 2-man game. But before the screen arrives, the bottom paired guard needs to read if he has a shot off the lift or a reject drive. If he has those options available to him and they are in his skill set, he should attack.

These are options after lifting HARD while waiting on the ball screen to arrive:

1. Catch and shoot
2. Read the baseline reject while keeping the ball protected
3. Engage in a 2-man game with the forward

Depending on how good the opponent is defensively and their defensive scheme, we will see a variety of types of defenses for our lift. Some will play it loose, others tight and some will overplay. It does not matter how they play it in terms of our execution of the lift, but it does matter in terms of our reads once we catch the ball. If we are played loose, it is likely a shot may be there on the catch. If we are overplayed, it is likely there will not be a shot and that we will have to work a little bit harder to secure the pass from the



reversal man, maybe even setting up the cut by walking the defender in a few steps. However, with this tight of coverage we will want to give solid exploration to a backdoor option or rejecting the screen on the catch and driving baseline to make a play. If the defense plays the lift as what we refer to as tight (halfway be-

tween loose and overplay), there is an equal chance of a shot or drive being available.

Reversal Man Denied If we can't get the ball to our reversal man, one thing we can do is skip the ball to the top paired player. Granted, this is a tougher option to execute if we are using the screen-in technique. To keep the continuity going, the ball is skipped to the top paired player and the bottom player lifts hard to take a hand off. The top paired player goes through like normal and the reversal forward sprints to set the screen.

