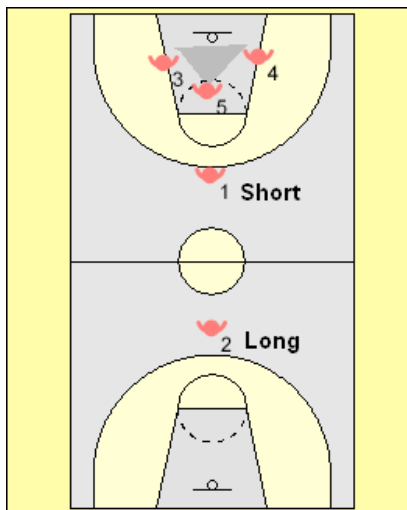


Transition defence

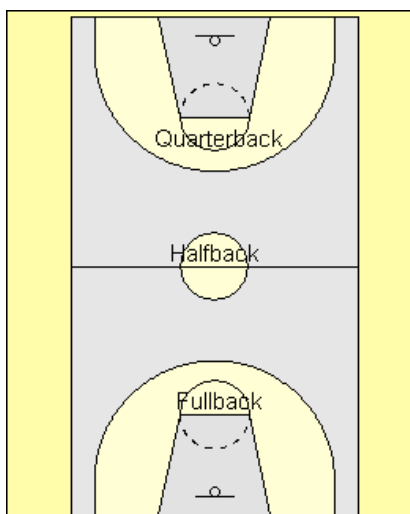
While doing clinics for Basketball Saskatchewan on the impact of the short shot clock and the eight-second backcourt, it became apparent to me that many coaches did not have a conceptual way to teach the strategy of transition defence. Most drills involved five players in assigned positions or were drills that did not mirror the concepts the coach was trying to teach. This may be ok for players at the Train to Compete stage of development or higher, but for players at the Learn to Train and Train to Train stages it is not advisable. These younger players need to learn multi-positions and multi-skills. They also need to have the skills broken down into sizeable chunks.



Transition defence

Here is the strategy that is very common with coaches today for defensive transition. When the shot is taken:

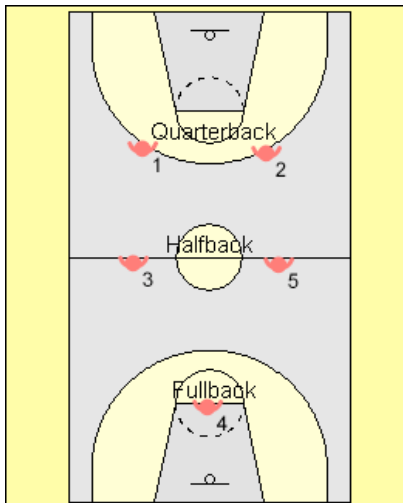
- #1 goes **short safety** at the top of the three point line (some coaches have this player go to the foul line; other more conservative coaches make it the volleyball attack line).
- #2 goes **long safety** at the centre circle (conservative coaches make this the team's defensive foul line).
- #3, #4 and #5 form the defensive rebounding triangle.



Being an old football coach, I used football terms to describe transition defence. We designated the three circles as specific position.

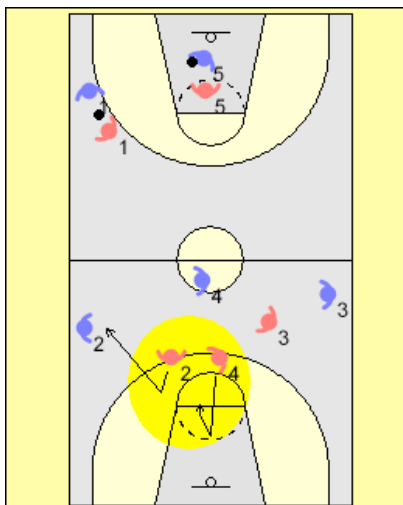
- Quarterback
- Halfback
- Fullback
- Get backs – sprint back on defence

Depending on the team we were playing, we could assign players different positions. If we were playing a team that did not run and used a specific player to bring the ball up the floor, we would have our players play quarterback and halfback. If the team was a fast breaking team, we may play halfback and fullback. When a player went in the game, you could always assign them a role on defence.



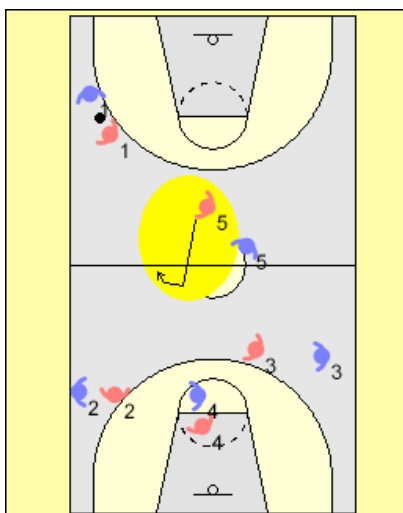
This also allowed the coach to indicate to the players when they needed to be turned and facing the ball. If we were running a press we may indicate to the front line that they needed to be facing the ball by quarterback, The second line was turned at halfback and the last line by fullback.

It allowed for quick and easy adjustments within the flow of the game.



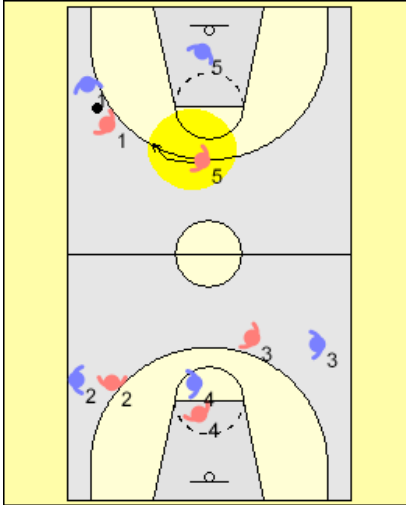
Release

This is a crucial element of this defensive strategy. In the example to the left #4 has sprinted back to protect the basket. This now allows #2 to move out to deny the pass up the floor. Most early three-point shots are due to the release not occurring. It also means a score at the rim if #2 moves out too soon and leaves the basket open.



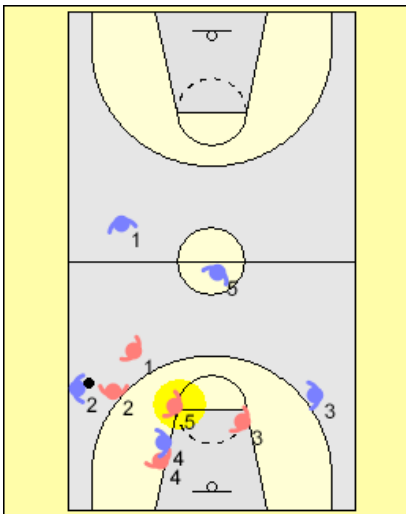
Shadow

Against teams that have one dominate player who brings the ball up the floor you can use your trail defender as a shadow. In this example, the shadow sprints to the halfback position and then looks to help on the guard bringing the ball up the floor. This is often effective because the offensive player who is being guarded by the shadow is not allowed to dribble or handle the ball.



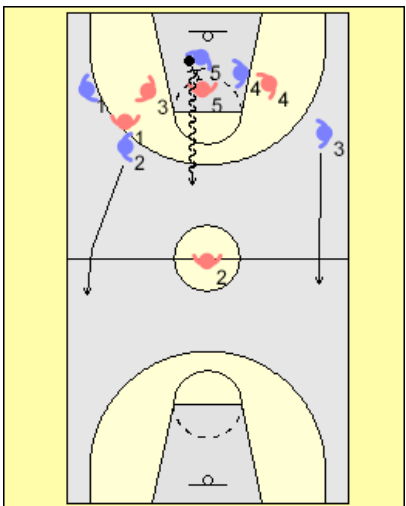
Quarterback Shadow

In this example, the shadow turns and starts to look to help by the foul line. This is because his/her offensive player is trailing behind the ball. Anytime a team uses a non-ball handler as an inbounder this is an effective strategy.



Fullback Shadow

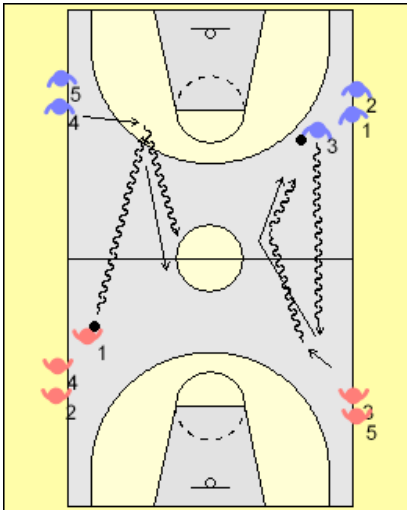
Here the shadow sprints to the fullback position to assist in stopping the ball going inside to a dominate post player or to clog the lane to prevent penetration.



Break out dribbles

One of the biggest weaknesses of this type of defensive strategy is the use of the breakout dribble by the rebounder. Many teams deploy a player to **jam** (this is usually the player closest to the defensive rebounder) the rebounder to prevent a quick outlet pass or dribble. If a team does get the quick breakout, you are often caught in a disadvantage situation. With long rebounds off three point shots it is often more difficult to jam.

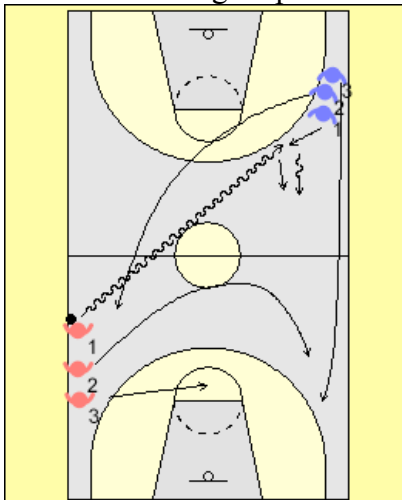
What follows are some drills to teach players some of these concepts of playing transition defence. All players take part in all positions.



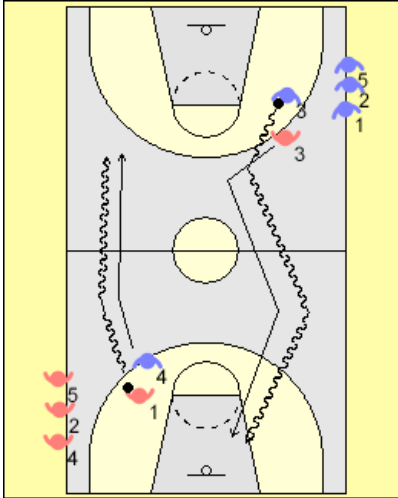
Containing the ball

A key concept in any transition defence is to contain the ball. We often hear coaches calling out to “**stop the ball**”. This is a very difficult thing to do in the open court. It is more important that our first line defender can make the ball move to a certain area of the floor, usually the sideline, and keep it there. Instant ball pressure also prevents the player from making an easy pass up the floor. Especially the long cross-court pass that forces the most rotation by the defence.

The players form four lines near the old hash marks. The player with the ball dribbles hard to a specific spot (The coach can decide where this can be or make it random. It is easier for the defence the closer the ball is to the sideline) and sets the ball down, This player is now the short safety who must funnel the ball to the sideline. The player on the other side picks up the ball and now becomes the offensive player. They play one on one to the far basket. You can give points for making the ball cross half at the sideline.

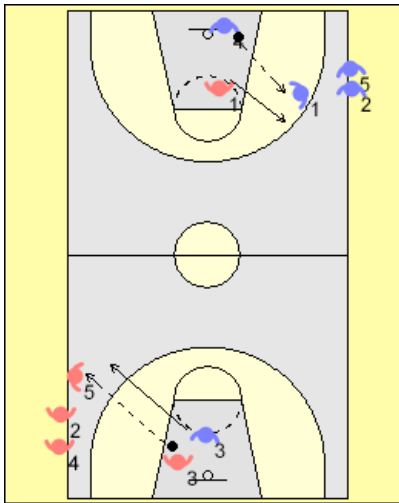


This is another way that you can start drills in a dynamic fashion. The defensive team does a dribble up and sets the ball down. The offensive team breaks as the ball is being dribbled. The coach may blow a whistle to indicate when the ball has to be set down,



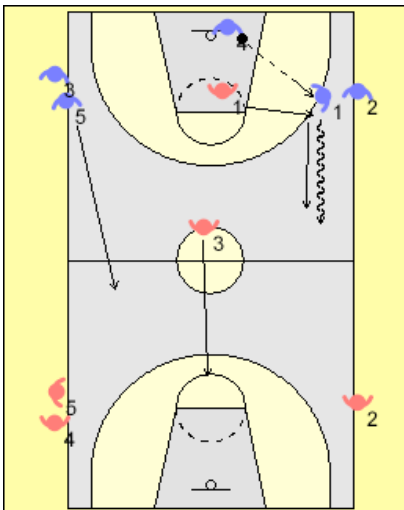
Full court 1 on 1 with transition defence

The players line up as shown in the diagram. They are restricted in the area they can use to play one on one.



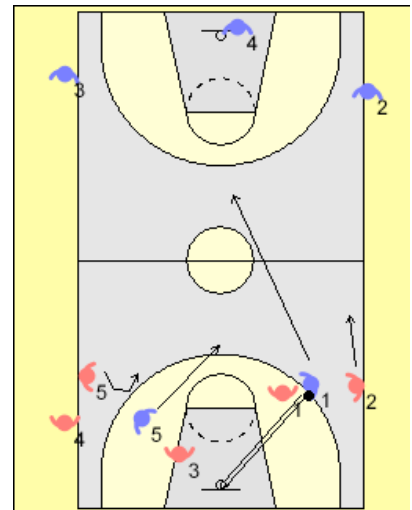
When the defender gains possession of the ball off a turnover, made or missed shot he/she passes the ball to the next player in line. The offensive player must quickly go from offence to defence. This is working on being a short safety.

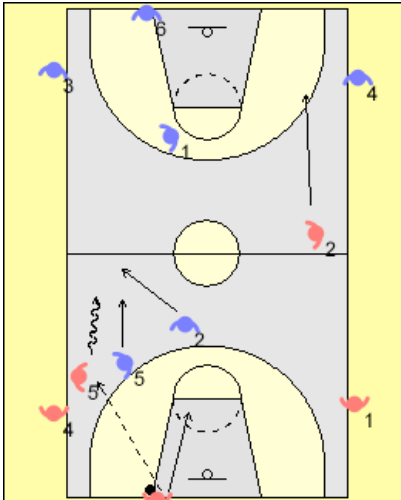
You can load the drill by allowing a break out dribble. This puts more pressure on the defender.



2 on 2 Continuous Transition Defence

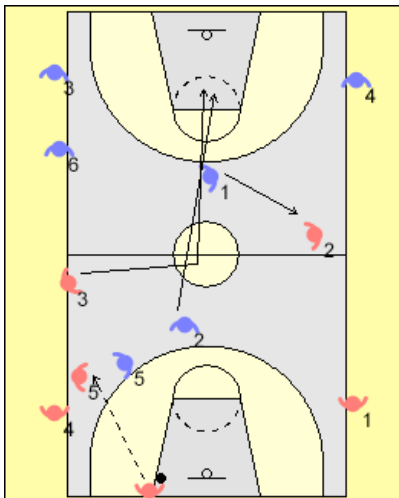
The players line up as shown. When the defence gets the ball, it is passed to the next two offensive players. The two players who were on offence must quickly become the long and short safety. The players who were on defence fill in as the next subs.





3 on 3 Continuous Transition Defence

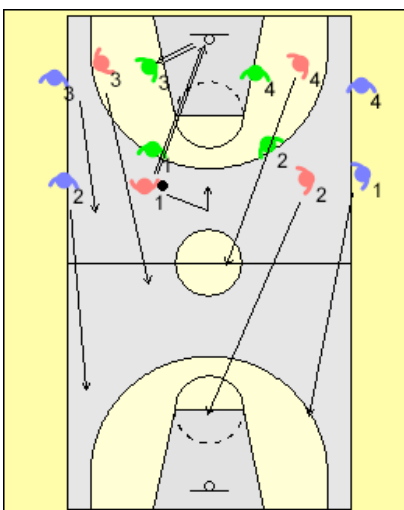
The third player is standing out of bound ready to inbound the ball. This allows the team to practice the shadow technique. As the player, guarding the inbounder, can stop and help since the inbounder is trailing.



Release

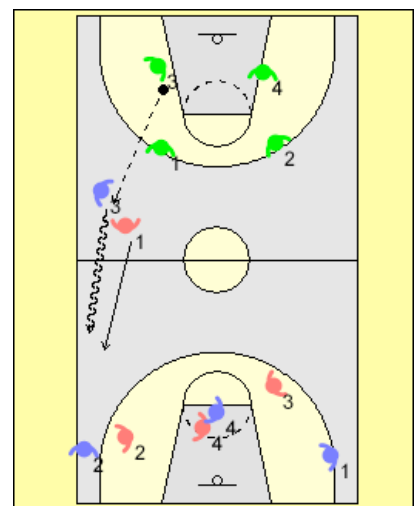
By placing the third offensive player up the floor, it forces the defence to practice the release technique as this offensive player runs to the rim. This player must run through the centre circle to simulate a first big. The long safety cannot give up the basket until the other player comes back to release.

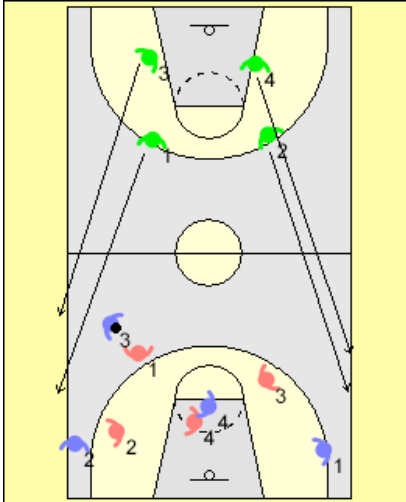
Note: all of these a drills are continuous. You can keep score between the two teams.



4 on 4 on 4 Transition Defence

You will need 12 players to run this drill. It is a conditioning drill as everyone is constantly moving. When the team on offence gives up the ball they must quickly match the team that is out of bounds.





The defensive team must sprint the floor to set up in the spots out of bounds for when possession of the ball changes. Players will cheat if you do not make them get to certain spots. I used to use this drill to determine the fitness level of my team.

Another way to keep score is by recording the number of score-stop-scores a team can string together.