

Sample Offense for 3/4B Level

Over the years I have seen many different offenses run at this level. Many work and like any coaching, none is the best as it depends on what you think you can accomplish given the set of kids you have. In all cases the goal is to keep it simple and do what you can to encourage the kids to be moving without the ball. (Not necessarily at the same time but avoiding 4 guys standing still waiting for the 1 w/the ball to make the move/etc.)

Below is how my co-coach and I had our kids setup the offense and overall it worked well for us. Although we did have two plays I have outlined below, most of the trips up was just letting the kids learn themselves the value of moving the ball around and encouraging the basics.

Positions

I had a point guard, two off-guards, and two forwards. Although that is usually what I referred to them as, it is easiest for below to refer them as a 1 (point), 2 & 3 (off guards) and 4 & 5 (forwards).

Between periods, each kid would come into the game knowing which of the 5 positions he was for that given 5 minute period. (I'd frequently run out w/them quickly to setup while the other team was coming out to the court and the refs getting setup...it was usually my co-coach that had them prepped for their positions while they sat the previous period if I was coaching/encouraging the kids currently on the floor.)

(Hoop)



- 1 takes the ball up after it being passed in by a designated player each period. (better to assign this "pass in" player by period...can be any of the other 4...like the 1 we always tried to rotate this to give different kids the opportunity.)

- I like to keep the kids out of the paint area and foul line at the start to keep that open. (especially at DThayer where the court was so small) As the season went on we would try plays (depending on the kids I had that year) where the 4 or 5 would come up to get the ball at the foul line.

- Not using any plays ideally a pass in from the 1 to (2 or 3) and the kids would start moving the ball. (4 or 5 encouraged to "switch" spots just to encourage movement) 2 or 3 (or 1) encouraged to get it down to a 4 or 5.

- Usually at my 2nd practice I taught the kids how to set a pick. (really making sure they know it wasn't a "football block" but the idea of getting to a spot, getting set, and if the defender got by you that was not a "bad" thing - else they consider it like a football block where they have to make the pick work and 99% of the time commit a foul)

- The two basic plays we would use would be:

"Play 1"

The 1 take the ball up slowly so everyone has time to get set. As the 1 takes the ball across mid-court (or just before) he yells "Play 1" so all the kids have a few seconds to think about what they will be doing...

The 1 takes the ball across mid-court and passes to either the 2 or 3. (assume the 2) Once the pass comes to the 2 he holds the ball (w/o dribbling) as immediately the 4 comes up and sets a pick for the 2. The 2 waits for the pick to be set (important for him not to

leave too early) and makes an attempt to dribble to the basket. (if it goes to the 3 then it is the 5 that comes up to set the pick)
As he goes to the basket many things can obviously happen so as the season goes on we work on what his options are and other guys can do to get open/etc.

- teaches the 2 & 3 to work to get open

- teaches the 1 his job is not to "take the ball up and drive to the hoop"

- teaches the 4 & 5 to be ready and part of the play based on where the pass goes

(i.e. all 5 kids can be involved and always at least 3 of the kids on the initial pass-in)

In general it keeps the kids moving with their head in the game. (at least that is the intention..it takes many weeks before the kids fully "get" this play...however, repeating it each practice gives them the hang of it)

This play may sound more involved reading this than it is. At a given time there is really one kid of the 5 doing one thing (entry pass, set the pick, dribble by) and the rest is flexible. Like any plays it takes the kids some time to get it down...

"Play 2"

(Play 2 is much more basic than Play 1)

As the 1 takes the ball up the court and crosses half-court he yells "Play 2".

The 2 & 4 simply switch spots/areas.

The 3 & 5 do the same.

This is simply to get the kids moving. Ideally 4 & 5 should be popping out amid the "commotion" and be freed up to take a pass.

(Not to make it more confusing but we also had "D Play 2" which was for "Diagonal Play 2" which the 2 & 5 would switch and the 3 & 4..again, just to get them moving and cause some "commotion" to free up players for a pass. I always waited a bit before introducing "D Play 2")

These two plays we repeated often. More than 2 I always considered to be overload for this level. For the most part it was probably less than half of the time I would call out a play. (again, empowering the point guard to truly "yell it out" and call the play as he crossed mid-court...for some of the kids that were a bit more timid, taking the ball up and calling out the play was a victory for their progress)

These plays (especially play 1 where once that entry pass was defended well killed the play) were obviously very easy for an opposing coach (and some opposing players) to figure out once the game began. However, even when they were "onto us" I'd still do them (a bit less frequent) just to keep the kids moving. In addition, if you rotate the kids at all 5 positions during the different periods each will have a chance to perform each action in the play.

As mentioned above, over the course of the season we would try some others (forward pops out to the foul line/etc.). However, one thing I always tried to avoid was setting a pick for the 1 taking the ball up the court....this has the potential to have a big collision as the kids are so often out of control as it would be blind on the defender coming up the court (*)...it is tempting to do but I know overall this was discouraged..it is not against the rules to do this but you just need to be careful if doing so.

* yes, a good strategy but again 3/4th introductory hoop...