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Team defense against PnR

The issue of PnR is always a current coach topic...no matter what is the level of competition or quality of the players you work with. According to some coaches, PnR is the basic means of offense while according to the others it's only an additional one. Anyway, PnR is very popular in offense, it is used very much and thus I think that one should pay attention to this issue. Personally I'm not a coach that likes PnR, offensive, but I must be ready to use it in offense and to defend from it because it is very popular with the NBA. Coaches even like to say that the defense of the NBA team is as good as the PnR defense is good. Of course, no matter what your coaching philosophy is you will certainly take into account in the offense phase the player' personnel that you have in your team; if we speak of a team that you haven't chosen yourself. As it is common in our business...the coaching quality is the capability to "adjust" and the possibility to approach new players and team as a whole. The amount of the various team types that you are capable of coaching is limited above all by your knowledge of coaching. Look for example at Houston and the coach Tomljanovic. He has for many years had the most dominant league center Olajuwon; at present he almost hasn't got a "5" in team...fantastic coach transformation.

Terminology

I guess that Yugoslav basketball as a world famous and acknowledged "basketball school" should have its basketball terminology. Also when we use the term PnR. Undoubtedly the globalization of basketball is an ongoing process for a long time. It has its natural direction, ie. the rule of market. The basketball world market is getting unique, or it will soon become. I will explain why I think that we should not avoid using foreign terminology nor should it be debatable. I will discuss PnR defense, and not "bloc at the player with a ball" defense. I would mention that I personally don't like the term "game 2:2" because game of 2 players is much more than mere bloc of the player with a ball. The play of two offense players would never be limited to their cooperation in blocs.

First, I would like to remind you of the fact that basketball is just a game and should be considered only as such. Always! This game in its nature does not obey the "laws" but makes a first step and defense is always late...but of course the practice, that's the game, is something else. The match is reality. It is "live" but not predictable. I mean that when we talk of real defense against PnR "winning the ball" is not mentioned. Winning the ball may be a mere product of the error in offense...Closer to reality is to indirectly decide on the choice of offense player that will hit the ball in the basket by means of the way that you defend PnR, ie. taking away the most powerful offense arms. You as defense choose the one that is going to stay uncovered...I think that only this is real.

Relation defense-offense-scouting

Speaking of defense I will inevitably discuss offense. They are naturally in correlation...and I will especially tell something about the special situations of the "sets" of opponents' teams that we encountered and had problems with. In the NBA each scouting must elaborate 3 following segments: - the way we defend the position of low post, - the way we defend PnR at side, - the way we defend high PnR. The PnR is very frequent in the NBA and every good defense must be ready for it. Good offense team in the NBA knows to use PnR very well. Every good offense should have 2 dimensions: depth and width!!! Interchangeability of depth and width makes an offense good and undefendable. The offense width is realized with good players distribution in the offense field, with good outer shoot. Without a good shoot the first two conditions seem less important. Good shooters make offense extension. Unless the defense lets it, the offense player that shoots will automatically be "in the zone" although the "man" is played. Two steps backwards will be made and they will slowly rotate on the player. The problem of young US players, Clippers, is a bad shoot and not enough work at its perfection...The offense depth is another essential dimension of every good offense. The depth is realized in two ways: 1. by the game at the position of low post. 2. by penetration. I have said on purpose, "position of low post" (I haven't said "center" because in the NBA almost all players are individually trained to play backwards to the basket. That is the essential part of the NBA offense. We mentioned the penetration, ie. getting through to the 1st defense line and taking the ball into the racket field and field of immediate realization, ie. penetration is done in 3 ways: 1) double pass 2) individual players penetrate in game 1:1 3) PnR. Let's get back to PnR: in my opinion the basic PnR function offense is penetration and obtaining the offense depth. It was a long time ago when PnR was a means to acquire the time and numerical offense advantage in certain microspace. These days the offense is more aggressive, quick, more mobile and hard to predict...Using PnR one gets the offense depth and very often the players' reaction in "help side" is initiated and then with an extra pass free offense players are found. I usually tell to my players waiting at the "help side" that PnR is played with principles. Only principles are permanent, and the rules are changing!!! Why am I against any form of exclusiveness in coaching job. I don't believe when it is said that exists "certain" staff (and there are a lot of examples) that a priori does not exist in basketball...But I believe you when you say "this way or this principle gave me better results...". This is what actually occurred with PnR; for example, at the beginning of 90's in Europe there was a trend "not to play PnR or giving in balls"...I am repeating that what you are going to play with your team depends on the players you have in the team. That's the key point. But still at the market are more popular players that "resolve" well PnR than players that "defend" well PnR!

Defense does not tolerate improvisation

Older coaches used to say that "offense wins the match and defense wins the championship". In my opinion, a great quality one team could possess when dealing offense is IMPROVIZATION. But I also mean that there is no improvisation in defense because of the simple reason that we should always

know whose “error it was”. This certainly does not mean that there is no anticipation - foretelling in defense, but everybody in the team should know whose RESPONSIBILITY and finally, fault it was. It is in human character and nature to blame somebody else, and we always encounter that in this job. Acceptance of the CONSTRUCTIVE critique is an important point of team control and control of each player separately. We work with young and ambitious people that have very developed ego. I try to teach my team that “we” won the score and not “you” or “me”. The team whose common interest is priority than the personal one has a chance to be good defense team. Personally I don’t like COLECTIVE responsibility in defense. Bad team always finds a way to lose a match. That is why a bad player “is never to blame”...McGinis. A perfect match does not exist...If there were, then your team wouldn’t lose a single point, and this means that the basketball is a game of faults which are constituent part of every match. But, the idea of defense is to predict offense solutions and to respond to them in the most rational and to respond to them in the most rational way. When you work with a good team you will often hear that a defense player that loses a ball tell to his team and teammates and “takes over the responsibility (my fault)”...That’s OK, but if not exaggerated. There’s a limit...One should go one step beyond.

Theoretically “nothing is defended”

The purpose of defense is to prevent scoring a point or pushing the offense into the most unfavourable position for shoot and having the shoot performed by the worst offense player of the team.

If we speak theoretically almost none offense segment is defended!!! I say it theoretically! In my opinion this especially refers to PnR. If we talk about this in a chess vocabulary then offense is always represented with WHITE and defense with BLACK figures. When we speak of top quality offense, the offense of the NBA teams, then in each PNR situation all 5 offense and defense players there are, the easier it will be for the defense! Less defense players do not defend PnR. Certainly I as a coach work on preparation of group defense, ie. 2:2, but the objective is a collective, ie. 5:5.

Offense execution

In the NBA rules (I think of 24 seconds), and especially with new rules inserted, the offense is limited in time. This means that there is no time for long moves or preparation of realization (ie. motion game), or going from bloc to bloc...and infinitely so on...The offense with all these limits is compelled to possess good, quick, timely realization, ie. good execution. Because of that very often when we look on the paper the set of an NBA team we will probably say “this is very simple”. Of course it is simple, because perfect staff are basically simple. Don’t forget that there are no great actions, sets...there are only “great players that make great actions”. There are a lot of examples for that, Utah, Sacramento, Lakers, Portland, Dallas...It is more important how your team does something than what he does. Surely the most crucial is the players’ personnel, ie. whether the chosen staff you play is convenient to the players in your team. In good offense execution, I repeat, it is very important that all 5 players are active in the

offense field, that they are trained into individual technique - offense tactics...and the most essential part of execution is offense timeliness. The offense team moves from the basic spots of the position offense. There are also timely offense players' motion; seeing through the offense, recognizing the spots that are not defended and "penalty"...ie. offense execution. Good offense execution requires good "defense execution". The offense is shorter but has more quality...this inevitably affects greater quality of defense...especially in PnR defense. After rotation there is no rotation!!!

Choosing PnR defense

I consider 5 things crucial for the choice of PnR defense: 1) choice of players in your team, and, of course, of leading players in team. 2) your coaching philosophies 3) scouting, ie. match preparation 4) location of PnR performance 5) depends on the rhythm of the match you wish to play, because generally with defense you change tempo...

1) your team players are crucial. How "wise" and rational they are, how aggressive, mobile they are...You will never be successful if they "are working for you" but actually they are working for the opposite side to the one they are standing at...Explain on the field: here the term "side help" is interpreted here, in my opinion in somewhat different way: "action side is composed of those offense players who are in sight of a player with a ball that penetrates, ie. players that are at the side of the "passing hand"; while side help is composed of players that stay out of side of "passing hand". Players are ready to receive the ball and slide at side..For that reason the most dangerous type of penetration is "penetration into the center" because it opens the largest sight for extra pass. Practically for a long time PnR has been used with penetration into the center, because theoretically defense "falls" or has least chances to defend successful such an attack. However in the NBA angles and combinations of the PnR usage are very different...fist down, fist up, fist side, step-up...If I could choose, then I would believe in the future as well (as offense) that FIST-SIDE is the strongest PnR angle. Only top players are offensive, and top playmakers, can find a player out of their sight, and they are very rarely to be seen.

To summarize, the offense using PnR are following: 1. realization (which is not an imperative), 2. getting the ball into the defense's depth and making defense scrunch (making an offense deep). 3. simply ball changes side. Ideal offense should possess all these characteristics...for example Dallas..Lakers...Clippers...

PnR as Initiator of defense reaction

I mentioned that according to some coaches PnR is the basic offense means and for some it's only an additional one. PnR is often used to "prepare" attack for execution (or as an introductory motion), for example to change the offense side...but often occurs that the coach tells his team: "...we play...and if the action doesn't turns out to be efficient then play 2:2".

Thus PnR initiates defense reaction. Defense must react immediately and practically to decide what to defend and what not to defend. PnR is the problem that is caused by offense and which has to be solved by defense at the very

moment. What is not defended becomes solution, ie. offense punishment...That is a great advantage of offense because within only few seconds the solution is made...PnR is especially used by teams and players that are not good enough in "isolation", ie. in the game 1:1. For that reason they need help to create something. This help is PnR. Everybody knows of very slow guards that very excellent in PnR usage: Mark Jackson, Kidd, Stoudmire, and even Payton...

PnR as team defense

In my opinion, PnR defense should be considered only as team defense!!!And only as such! That is not 2 players' defense, because we have said already that 2:2, theoretically is not defended...PnR begins with such 2 offense players' game but in offense all 5 are included. If the offense is bad and PnR limits only to the game of 2 or 3 or you force the game and principles in defense with players that cannot perform it.

In that way you indirectly work against yourself...You must make a strategically good choice of the staff that your team can play. The rule that I obey is: "tactical faults may be forgiven, but strategic anyway..."

2. Your coaching philosophy is part of your personality, character and of course of the vision of the basketball game. With defense, ie. in this game phase, you can control the tempo of the match. You have to be able to speed up or to slow down the game...What is the difference between the stubborn and the persistent coach? Where is the limit? Personally I don't like to change; I don't want to be "broken down" by the opponent and to be forced to change my defense because I believe that "persistence" and sticking to principles is beneficial to the team in the end. I want them to think of us and not us to think of them...This in no way means that we should lack flexibility and readiness to make certain adjustments. I will mention the example of Pat Riley and the match Clippers-Miami of this season when Riley persistently doubled our guards at PnR; and this was the best way for us to shoot because in the game were the centers that pointed from the half-distance, Elton Brend, Rooks...and we went on playing only "1-5 punch" (the NBA rule is not to change the tactics as long as it is successful and gives results)...Riley hold the TRAP until the last 5 minutes when after time he made a change...but it was late...he lost...I will leave it to you to think of the following: where is the difference between persistent, consistent coach and the stubborn one that is not ready to adjust?

3. SCOUTING, ie. report on the opponent...what's the game - what sets, players' personnel of the team (players' characteristics that use PnR and the position they play), individual characteristics of the team players, statistics, the report on latest 5 matches regarding the present shape, what rhythm of the match is not popular with the opponent's team...Scouting is very important when making decisions on the choice how to defend PnR at the next match. I put the scouting, on purpose, on the third place, because of its value, because I go on thinking that it is primary for its tema. What do you play is what matters!

4. LOCATION WHERE PNR IS PERFORMED. We will practically discuss this in the field...Is it in the front field, back field, at the side, high, at the racket board...? What are the PnR angles?

5. MATCH RHYTHM. I believe that we can surely create and control match rhythm. What is going on when you want to speed up the match? You instinctively enforce the defense. You instinctively tell your players: "Approach..."...isn't it? What is going on when you play against the quick up-tempo team of Dallas, Sacramento...and you are afraid to enter into the quick rhythm, and you want to slow down the game. Then you ask for the offense control: "we mustn't lose the ball"...and in any case I believe it because the game is unique...The control of the slow match one execute with offense, and the control of the quick match you perform with defense...I already know that many coaches will disagree with me on this...as for example Don Nelson, but what is useful in our business is that...thinking in a different way does not mean thinking in a wrong way!!

Let's get back to PnR, if I speed up the game with defense I will, I suppose, double the two players in PnR when close to each other in every situation and I will force them into quick solution of the offense; or I will slow down by taking over or directing at the front and then towards side help in the zone, and perhaps make them use extra pass...

QUALITY OF BLOC PERFORMANCE: Digression: I suppose that with every team you work with you encounter the same problem and that is executing bad offensive, real blocs. Believe me that there is also this problem in the NBA. The problem of bad timing, not waiting each other, not using the body of the player that blocs, passing by each other...and absurd but true is that the best players in blocking are physically inferior players (weaker), Payton, Nesh, Stockton...Stockton that is said to be the trickiest player in blocking. I am sure that in the JUBA league is still the best Kuzmanovic, who physically is not dominating at all...All these players are rarely placed at PnR.

COMBINATIONS ACCORDING TO THE POSITION AT WHICH THEY PLAY IN THE PNR

The combinations are the following ones:

1. **Guards-centers**; 15 14 24 25 34 35, and is the most frequent form of PnR usage, because ball is in the hands of the players that best control the ball in dribbling and the difference in the positions of the participating players.
2. **Guard-guard**; 1 2 3, this is a trend in the NBA. Almost all teams used this combination. Mismatch and whether overtaking is a handicap of offense or defense are to be discussed.
3. **Center-center**; cooperation 4 5, only few teams used this technique. The condition is brilliant individual technique of tall players 4 and 5. On account of my experience I may conclude that passing technique is the toughest lesson for tall players. All good tall players of the "league" are excellent passers: Divac, Weber, Shaquille...
4. **Centers-guards**; only few teams used the technique as well, while guard blocks the center. Among such teams are Clippers...It occurs naturally only in special situations...but it is worth mentioning because it really exists. Later we will illustrate all these combinations with practical examples of the NBA teams' sets. Coaching is a craft. It is practical and very concrete. Theory is a basis and the field is a match and reality...that's why I believe

that practical examples and field work will be more interesting to the “craftsmen” like you and me...

CLASSIFICATION OF TECHNIQUES ON ACCOUNT OF PLAYERS' MOTION THAT MAKES PNR IN THE GAME 2:2

I would like to list in this lecture all techniques of PnR defense that are used in the NBA. Some of them fit more and some fit less into my coaching philosophy. This time I will make a retrospective of all defense possibilities, its analysis and I think it could be interesting to illustrate this with practical examples of the NBA teams' sets and team players that made those sets special, ie. hard to defend. Every team and coach in the NBA classifies defense techniques into PRINCIPAL (BASIC) AND ADDITIONAL ONES: principal are the ones most frequently used and practiced and prepared for every match no matter against which team we play. Additional, of course, are only exceptions we are forced to make because of the specific characteristics of the opponent's team personnel. There are usually exceptions made only for one match. We make these changes after the analysis of the scouting report...

Most problems in the PnR defense we had in the situation when defense was not placed. In the phase of half-counter, counter. When opponent's guard drags the ball in dribbling, so called “DRAG” action, the following “inside” player of the position 4 and 5 blocks his penetration into the center. Among our players this efficiently uses Djordjevic...”DRAG” locations are most often at the central field position and often at side. This surprise factor in this case is very efficient. It is hard to defend because defense is not consolidated...not placed. Example:

Let's start chronologically with remark that chronology has been made on account of first player's motion under the bloc. So we will first elaborate techniques over the bloc, through the bloc and under the bloc. Classification is not made according to the frequency of usage!! For preparation of one match we usually have 2 basic technique and one “adjustment” prepared.

“FIST-SIDE”- bloc at side, into the center: 15 techniques are used in the NBA...

1. **“Hard-show”**, help and recover technique.
2. **“Houston”**, show + help of the players at the first passing line.
3. **Basic Clippers**...long show of the center and help to the player with a ball (we perform it with and without full rotation).
4. **Basic Indiana**...long show of the center and help to the player with a ball...with little switch...RICK SMITS technique.
5. **“RED”**- aggressive PnR doubling.
6. **“RED-MIAMI”**...doubling of Riley.
7. **“Open up and slide through”**...
8. **“Drop and plag”**...
9. **“Body-up and go under”**...
10. **“Switch”**...
11. **“Clippers”** and return to our player.

12. **“Minnesota”**, rotation at mismatch (center)
13. **“Go-green”**, rotation at mismatch (guard)
14. **“Blue” with rotation** is directing at the front.
15. **“Blue” without rotation** is directing at the front.

We, coaches, are craftsmen...practical people...thus I know that it would be more interesting to you to pass through all the situations in the field.

We will begin with the situation side - PnR, fist-side...to my distress I haven't followed the situation in the European basketball for a few years. What I have seen at some matches of the European league is that PnR is used a lot. Here in Europe we still have an active side of help (no defensive 3 seconds) and the time for attack has shortened to 24 seconds. Players are still moving a lot ...and that's OK. Idea of the NBA people is to speed up the basketball and to go on with the tendency of motion in offense. But look at this detail: placing offense players, showing all 5 solutions in the offense!!! ...if offense players (especially at the side of help) move, first they don't see the ball and thus they are neither prepared to receive it nor to attack the basket and shoot. For that reason in offense I like all players to be active and offense player to be ready to finish the action began from the PnR. Let's set and explain the personnel side of the PnR!!! Analisis:

1. **Hard show**: situations: hard show is a technique used in situations when a player with a ball (player that uses bloc) is not a dominant ball-handler, Piatkowski, Maggette...Those are players of the position 2,3, and sometimes 1 if it is not aggressive. Mark Jackson. The offense player that blocs is a good shooter and you don't want to leave free players at the “side of the action”, players at passing...in any case in such cases the advantage of the PnR is not that great that we should leave other players. Although everybody has to react very little, so that the player with a ball would think of them, and the primary obligation is to stay with your player.

Description of the technique: always in the PnR defense there is division of catch defense. In my opinion this basic rule of solving all kinds of defense problems is “solve only the staff that is in your sight; in front of you”. Often guard watches over the shoulder and loses from his sight the player with a ball. This is your responsibility; communication serves to announce you the danger that is ahead. Angle defense is essential in the PnR defense. Who defends depth and who defends width? Depth and width form the angle of 90°. In this technique a guard is heading for the depth (Iverson never uses PnR, he always fints-pretends it) and he should not expect help there. Width is obligation for the tall players. The tall does a body-up into the offense player and interrupts his motion by kicking him out of his axis because the offense player hits “at the target”, ie. defense player. One should be careful not to be rolled when one does a body-up into the offense player, as it does Karl Malone. I don't understand how one gets late in help at PnR when the opposite is logical in the case that you keep in principle the passing line closed? If we banalize the situation, the player that you cover goes to “beat” your player, there are two of them and you only watch and don't react (Krizevski)??? Showing is in the line with the offense player (one line) because the angle is ZERO and it is the worst for a good pass. If you are behind then you open the angle for passing or for “dribbling through the bloc”,

Iverson. Every SLIP of the great one in this technique is responsibility of such a player!!! Player with a ball also has to use his body. He steps towards the offense player and slides with him, as one body. He has to possess mental capability of independent coping with the bloc. If he does not think that way, than technique execution is very problematic.

Example: maybe Clippers with Megetti...

Good-bad sides: good sides are that you never have problems with mismatch. Players stay with their players. The offense does not get great advantage. Bad sides are that if guard does not breach the bloc and arrive then the offense player will get straight to the end...because all others will have an excuse not to help in ball breaching.

2. "Houston" technique

Situations: Houston technique is not frequent but it can be very efficient. It was used by Chicago, 5-6 years ago, in the final series against Utah when they had problems in PnR defense. This season Jerry Sloan, Utah coach, defended Sacramento. In such a way they left Stojakovic 2 times alone to shoot for 3 points...With Houston technique we, Clippers, defended and won Lakers last season when we defended Coby...As its name indicates, Houston and Tomljanovic use this technique.

Technique description: this technique is used when PnR player has excellent guard and brilliant tall one, that can shoot. Then you choose hard-show (identical technique), but you surely stay with the tall one and you send the player at the first passing line to impede penetration. Then you do full guard rotation, ie. in two ways: 1. if he starts widely with dribbling, then rotate with 3 defense players. 2. if the penetration is deep, than rotate with 2 players.

Example: Lakers-Clippers...or Utah-Sacramento...Chicago-Utah.

Good-bad sides of the technique: good thing is that you stop two best offense players; but the bad part is that you open the shoot at the ball side. If shooters do so, then they will be open...but I repeat that one should choose less evil, ie. influence the decision who is going to be the one that would put the ball in the basket.

3. Basic-Clippers, PnR defense

Situations: this is for many teams the most represented PnR defense manner. It is rather efficient, because there is a very aggressive pressure on the ball, and all positions are well covered. The attention is equaled at all opponent's players. For example, guard may be good, the tall one may shoot from half-distance and all players at ball's side are "dangerous for the basket"...This was the basic Clippers defense.

Technique description: the same principle of body play and guard slides as in hard-show technique. Center stays longer at help, ie. until the guard defeats the offense player with a ball. Guard sticks to depth, center to width. Every SLIP situation is occupying players at the side of help!!! Center returns to the heart of the racket and "sees through" the situation. I prefer center to look at the offense player in racket and to run with "hand high up" and thus reduce "target" for passing. If ball changes side and doesn't rotate, if ball goes to the same offense

side then rotation is made! One more thing: "Having rotated there is no rotation!" Let's remind ourselves of the fact that some teams send center even before, before pass, because if they were late then the shoot would already be performed. You depend on scouting for the match! In that case there is a zone-up. GUARD breaches the bloc. He goes over the bloc but under his center!! OVER and UNDER. I like to keep the first line closed. The guard from the angle must be in front of the center. At returning pass, the tall ones rotate and short ones get back to their people and there is no mismatch.

Examples: Lakers...with Kobe, Samaki Woker, Shaquille, Brian Shaw, Fisher.

Good/bad sides: this technique is used very much and has least bad sides. The issue is of opponent's players and what we want to defend. The good thing is that defense decides and the bad thing is of course everything that cannot be covered unless all 5 offense players are active.

4. **Basic-Indiana;**

Situations: technique is named after Rick Smiths, Pacers' center, while under the supervision of Larry Brown. Rick was very mobile, even excellent in placing himself in relation to the PnR players. He was capable of keeping the guard with a ball long enough and to make his offense wider, until the guard overcomes this again. Brilliant anticipation...

Technique description: Hard-show...the only difference is that the guard goes after his player, ie. over the bloc and again over his defense center. Over and over. Center sends him wide (but a great responsibility for sliding through is still present). Usually the center returns to his defense player because he leaves for the other side and his player is then at the side of help, so there is no full rotation. Other players are in the zone...

Example: Pacers' personne...at New York...

Good/bad sides: the good thing is that it slows down the offense and actually you push them into additional dribblings while they don't get anything out of them. The bad thing is that you need a tall player that is capable of controlling the offense player with a ball.

5. **Line-doubling-trap PnR:**

Situations: doubling is the most aggressive form of PnR defense. The ball is stopped in a very aggressive manner and dribbling is almost interrupted. Game is played against the dominant players with a ball (Payton, Stoudemire, McGrady), and especially if the centers are bad shooters. If there are big differences in offense players' quality then we choose this type of defense. Good technique, aggressive one, and the offense doesn't like it because with PnR called for they are actually calling for doubling.

Technique description: body game. Sliding with a player. Aggressive showing into the line with an offense player that makes a bloc and staying in trap as long as the ball is in the hands of the offense player. They make 90° angle. If offense player breaks a bloc with dribbling, then we behave as if it were a hard-show. We don't rotate while changing side in a pass. The first line is closed.

Examples: Minnesota...with Brandon, Garnett, Radoslav Nesterovic, Szczerbiak, Peeler.

Good/bad sides: the good thing is aggressiveness and stopping the player with a ball. Good rotation and of course bad shoot at the side of help are necessary. The bad thing is open center for shoot...or if you rotate the center at bloc or lob pass from Delirius from corner.

6. Line-Miami-trap Riley:

Situations: Riley is the coach famous for its principles and excellent defense strategy. At his place I have seen for the first time showing in front of the PnR. It is used when we play against a good guard, and into his bloc comes a slow center that is not a shooter. If our player, center from defense has that kind of domination then we use this advantage and send him earlier. This is a very successful technique for aggressive teams with initiative.

Technique description: the game is played hard with body (body-up). The center in defense also anticipates the arrival of PnR and shows in front of a defense player that wants to place the bloc. Actually there are no bloc and contact. Other players are in the zone. If the pass goes to the center then with rotate in full rotation. Later if the ball is sent farther to the angle of the field, center comes at that pass and then we enter into mild trap at angle to correct mismatch situation.

Examples: Boston that generally has excellent defense played brilliantly. In semifinal of the conference against Detroit they used this technique.

Good/bad sides: an aggressive team is necessary and a dominant mismatch in favour of the great defense player. If offense is inferior then this technique is efficient...

7. Open up and slide through

Situations: this technique we use in situations when guard that uses bloc is not a perfect shooter and we want to stay in touch with the center, ie. to keep it in sight.

Technique description: again we start with body game and push out the player that places the bloc. A defense player at ball that goes under the bloc (regularly or in roll) is verbally warned in time. Center makes one step behind, lefts the place between him and the offense that tries to bloc. Players at the side of help are ready to help a little bit but nevertheless they stay with their players in touch. No rotation...you stay with your players.

Examples: maybe New Jersey...Jason Kidd...Martin Kenyon...

Good/bad sides: if the guard does not penetrate aggressively and does not shoot then this technique is excellent because there is no rotation. The problem appears if they start to break through and our centers have already entered the match without initiative, then aggressiveness is hard to recuperate.

8. Drop and plag:

Situations: this technique we use when there is no efficaciousness in PnR, just the same as in the previous technique. Often 1-5, if the guard is slow and without shoot and the center too. This is not the way to defend PnR located under the hitting line because then no matter how bad shooter is he will try to shoot. For a long time the teams of the NCAA league defended PnR because the guard are very bad shooters.

Technique description: the center is pushed a little bit. The most important thing is the angle of center's position in defense. He remains under the bloc but he defends the depth. The step behind, step aside where the offense player with a ball comes. Still it is necessary "to buy" time in order for the guard to return and control the player with a ball.

Example: this was used very often by...Olowokandi, McInnis...

Good/bad sides: the good thing is if guard doesn't break through and doesn't shoot. The bad thing is the return into re-pick, because drop-plag into both sides is difficult. The problem appears if they start to do it and then aggressiveness returns...their rotation.

9. Body-up and go under (under the bloc)

Situation: if we want to leave PnR out of the zone for shoot; if we want to stay in touch with the center that can shoot and if we are not afraid of the shoot of the guard with a ball

then this technique is ideal.

Technique description: the passing line is kept closed. The defense player moving towards the ball makes contact and pushes out the offense player that wants to make the bloc. There is almost no bloc. The guard moves under both and bumps into the offense player with a ball heading for basket. There is no rotation but the side of help must be ready.

Examples: If one defends Miami with Strickland and Grant and Mourning...or Minnesota with Brandon and Garnett.

Good/bad sides: the good thing is if the guard does not shoot and does not penetrate...

He is in touch only with center...if he penetrates then the problem appears.

10. Switch.

Situations: it is used very much in the NBA and not only for the players of the same positions. Certainly, every bloc guard-guard, or center-center was switched by us. Sometimes the offense performs on purpose such a bloc and initiates switch. One may ask who is in the unfavourable position, ie. mismatch. This technique makes PnR blade blunt, because besides defense players change nothing was obtained in space and time.

Technique description: communication is very important issue. In switch the defense player whose player follows the bloc remains one step behind and overtakes the player with a ball...Defense player that was blocked moves under the bloc and stays at their player. Obligatory under the bloc!!!

Example: Dallas was defended by almost everyone with switch...

Good/bad sides: the good thing is that PnR blade is made blunt. Nothing is obtained. The bad thing is the problem of mismatch...

11. Clippers-switch

Situations: if regular switch is made then the teams that are slower at recognizing and punishing mismatch "are being punished" with reswitch and the advantage of bad mismatch is lost.

Technique description: regular overtaking but at the sign of the bottom player reswitch is made. It is better to be late and maybe for a moment to make a trap and then return to the further player. Side help players help a little bit...but there is no rotation, unless if in reswitch pass goes to the free center. Then we make one more rotation...

Example: Clippers against Denver...

Good/bad sides: the good thing is that the weakest switch point of mismatch is neutralized in that way. The bad thing is that if there is no timely response and if you get punished, the team loses the selfconfidence.

12. Minnesota-switch

Situations: some teams, especially in play-off used this technique.

Technique description: when switch is made then a tall player rolls and takes away the short one that remains with him at the position of low post, in order to "solve" it. The defense then sends the tall one at the side of help, or any other player that can defend the position, and in that way any domination at the side of ball is impeded.

Examples: Minnesota at Dallas...Sacramento at Dallas...

Good/bad sides: good neutralization of mismatch. Bad thing is if switch is late and if ball quickly changes the side of action.

13. Go green switch

Situations: this technique also solves the problem of mismatch in switching. It was done by Clopemburg at Seattle. I haven't seen that it was used but it exists and has its value.

Technique description: regular player switch. Then the closest outer player at the side of help is sent to "double" the ball, without the idea of winning it, and this is the sign for the tall one to retreat and to find free center.

Examples: we go again to Dallas...

Good/bad sides: good neutralization of mismatch in PnR. The bad thing is switch is late.

14. Blue switch towards front with rotation

Situations: if the center that blocs is not a good shooter, and if we don't want to take our tall players from the shoot zone...then we call BLUE. The space that is used is at the level of the "imagined" prolonged line of free hits...Actually there is no bloc!!!

Technique description: When a tall player recognizes the danger of PnR, then he warns the guard that immediately directs the ball towards the front line. He practically turns his back to the player that enters the bloc and the ball stays in the offense field. Division of roles is: a guard defends width, center defends depth and thus they form 90° angle. Other players form the zone. With remark that the closest outer player at the side of help closes the first passing line (wins the pass). If the ball nevertheless gets back to his (a trick), or sometimes stays till the end of action or if the ball with lob changes the side then everyone gets back to his people. If the guard tries to break the down line of direction then one should make a double.

Example: Seattle...with Barry, Payton, Baker, Drobnyak, Radmanovic.
Good/bad sides: this defense has to be well trained. It calls for the game against not so good offense centers...The bad thing is a quick switch to other side...and remaining alone at shoot...and collective responsibility when trap is broken.

15. Blue-switch towards the front line without rotation

Situations: if one doesn't have good centers shooters then one should use this technique. There is no rotation but the return pass makes one target the center. The bad thing is a quick switch and going away to the new PnR.