



**WHEN IS A ZONE NOT A ZONE?**

**BRIAN ALDRED**

**NORTH WEST REGIONAL CLINIC**

**10<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023**

**#TOGETHERWEAREBASKETBALL**

**[WWW.BASKETBALLENGLAND.CO.UK](http://WWW.BASKETBALLENGLAND.CO.UK)**

# CONTENTS

- Definitions
- Why No Zones?
- Why Play Zones?
- Violations of the No Zone Rule
- Reference Points
- Basic Zone Alignments
- Onus of Proof
- Guarding Many or Guarding No One (How to tell)
- Proving it's a Zone
- Typical Man-to-Man Offences
- Game Situations (that may occur)
- In Game Sanctions



# DEFINITION OF A ZONE

***Zone defence:*** A team defence in which players are assigned to guard specific areas of the court, rather than players.

***Zoning:*** The help defender is protecting against penetration by staying in a direct line between the dribbler and the basket.

***Zone press defence:*** Full court zone defence, mostly used to trap the ball.

***Any defence played inside the three-point line which does not incorporate normal man to man defensive principles shall be considered to be a zone.***

# REFERENCE POINTS & COURT LAYOUT

- Stance
  - Open- 1 hand in passing lane
  - Closed - away from the ball and their defender
- Lane lines
- Key
- Split line / centre line (help)
- Right side
- Left side
- Middle (lane line to lane line)
- Line of the ball



# WHY NO ZONES ?

- It is a FIBA rule for U14 worldwide
- The defensive principles of rotation, “help and recover”, containment, vision of the entire court and positioning relative to both player and the ball are important fundamentals that underpin most, if not all, defensive philosophies.
- Zone defences at age groups limit the development of individual and team skills. E.g., driving opportunities are limited and players often do not have the muscular strength and coordination to shoot, with good technique, from the perimeter or throw “skip” passes.
- It reduces the need for defensive skills such as “closing out” and positioning
- As a youth coach winning should never come before enjoyment and development.
- If you value winning or simplicity over player development, then playing a zone defence will get you the results that you want.

# WHY NO ZONES ?

A sanction is applied for teams breaching the No Zone Policy in the following competitions (Or full court press is applied after a team is up by 20 points or more):

- U12 (All,Mixed and female)
- U14 Conference Age Group (male and female)
- U14 Regional Age Group (male and female), single fixtures
- U16 Regional Competitions.
- U16 Conference (Where hybrid zone rules are applied)



# WHY PLAY ZONES?

- The main reason **for** playing a zone is it is an effective defence at youth level. It is very difficult for youth players who are still mastering fundamentals, learning about their body movement, strength and coordination to score against a zone.
- Having 4 or 5 players in the key and a 24' or 14' shot clock the attacking players are often “forced” to launch up long-range shots that have very little chance of going in; and
- Defenders are already in better locations in the key to collect the rebounds by virtue of their standing the key, which lead to
- Limiting the number of offensive possessions, a team has in a game. ***That can't be fun or enjoyable for our young players!***



# VIOLATIONS OF THE NO ZONE RULE

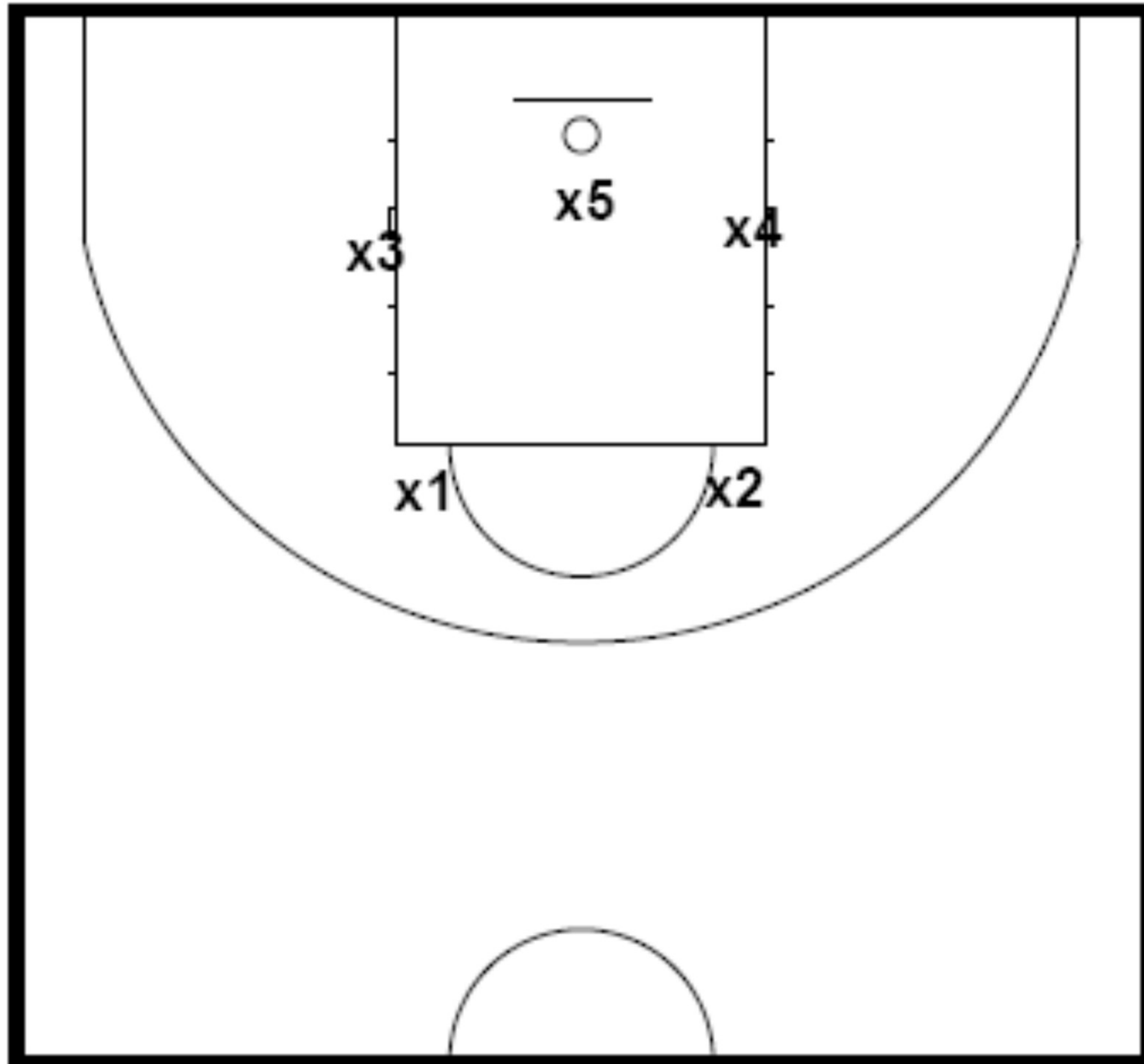
Violations of the “no zone” rule will generally fall within one of the following categories:

1. **One or more players** were not in an **acceptable man to man defensive position** in relation to the player they are guarding and the player with the ball;
2. **A cutter** moved all the way through the key and **was not defended using acceptable man to man defensive** techniques (for example, “bumping” the cutter, following the cutter or switching);
3. Following a trapping or help and recover situation the team **made no attempt** to re-establish man to man defensive positioning;
4. The team zone pressed and did not assume man to man defensive positioning once the ball had been advanced into the **quarter** court.



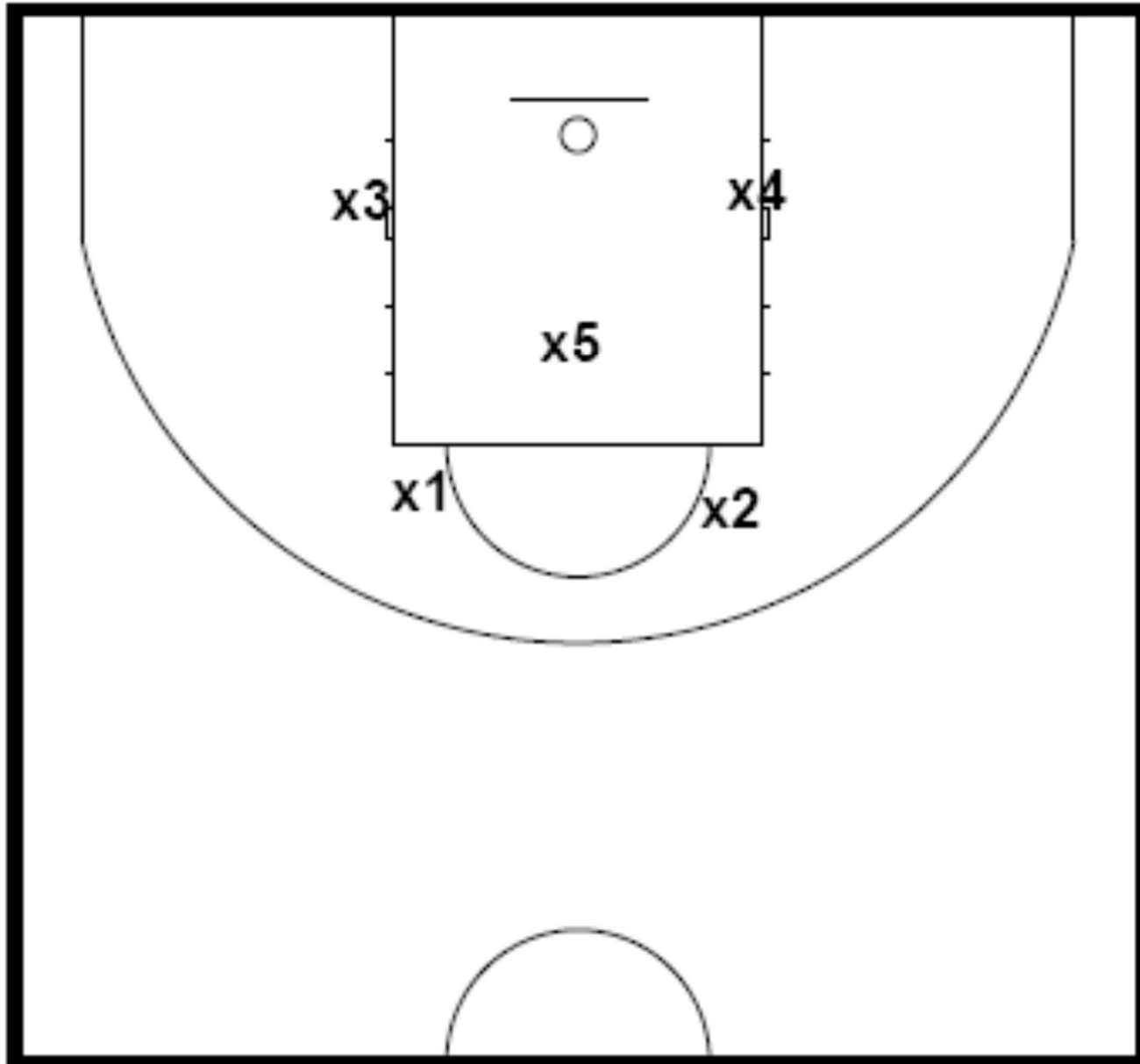
# BASIC ZONE ALIGNMENTS

• 2 - 3



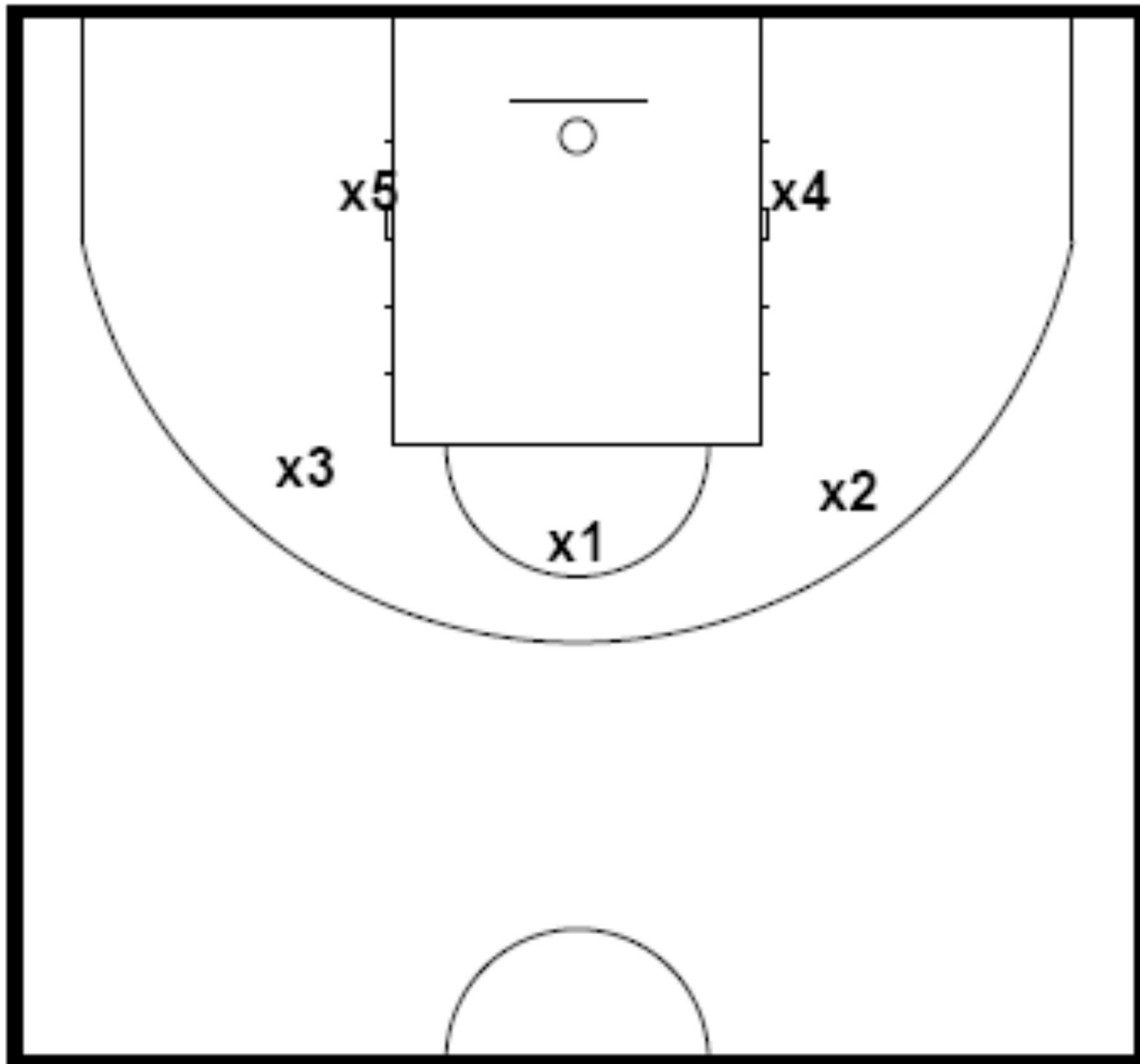
# BASIC ZONE ALIGNMENTS

• 2-1-2



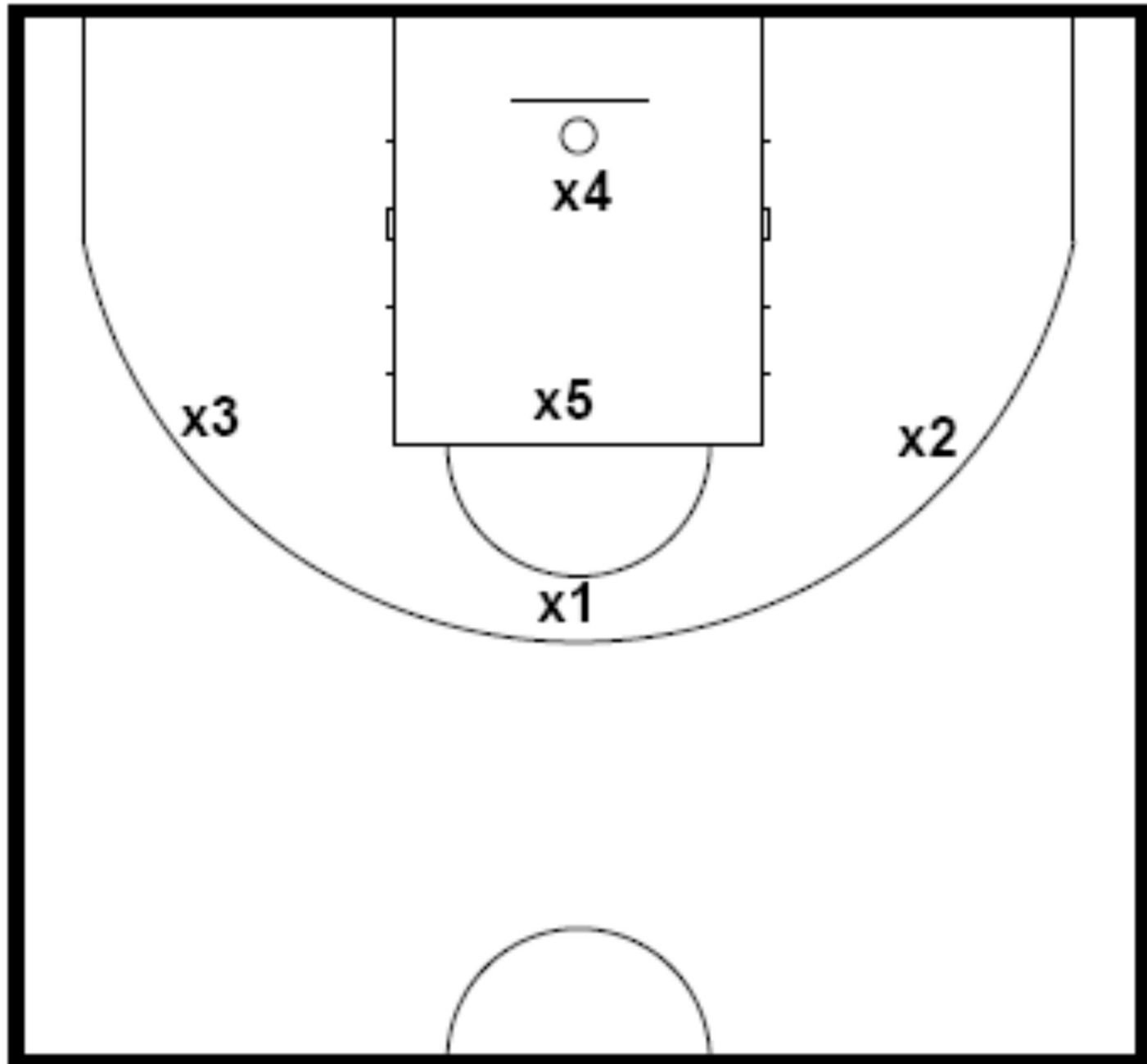
# BASIC ZONE ALIGNMENTS

• 3 - 2



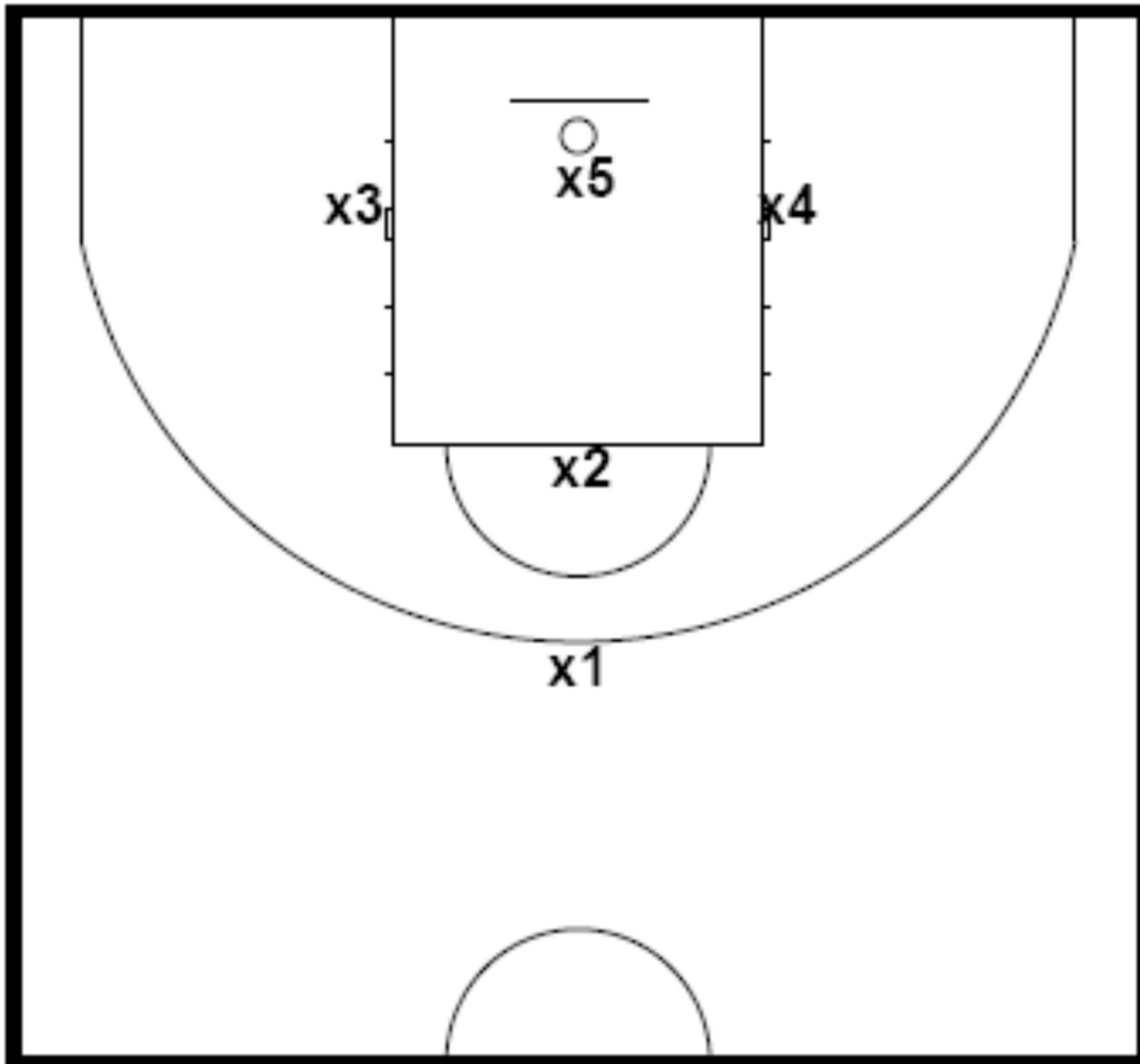
# BASIC ZONE ALIGNMENTS

- 1-3-1



# BASIC ZONE ALIGNMENTS

•1-1-3



# ONUS OF PROOF

## Onus of Proof

- The onus of proof lies with the offensive team, which means that they must pass the ball and move so that you can determine whether or not the defence is playing man to man principles.
- If the offensive “big” stays on the weakside, their defender can legitimately stay in a “split line” position.

## Watch a Number of Play Phases

- Often the ball is shot or turned over before you can properly determine if a team is playing a zone.
- You cannot judge a zone from one offensive or defensive phase. You will need to watch a number of game phases before determining if the defence is playing appropriate man to man.

## Don't worry about the full court

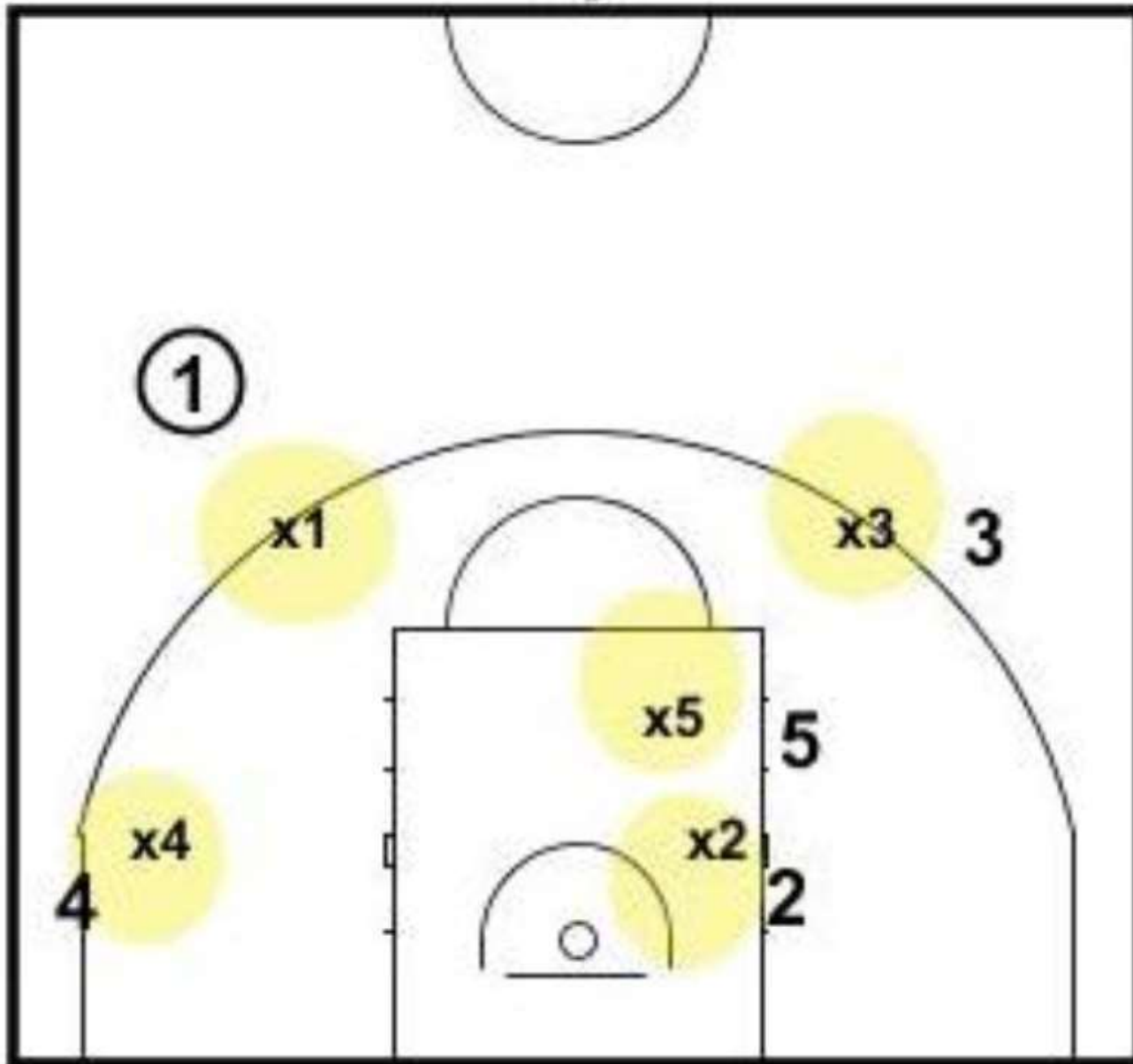
- The rule is only concerned with playing man to man principles inside the three-point line.
- Teams can play any defence they want in the full court.
- Just because a player or a number of players run back to their defensive key does not make it a zone defence **PROVIDED THEY RECOVER** to their offensive player.

# GUARDING MANY OR GUARDING NO ONE?



# GUARDING MANY OR GUARDING NO ONE?

2





# GUARDING MANY OR GUARDING NO ONE?

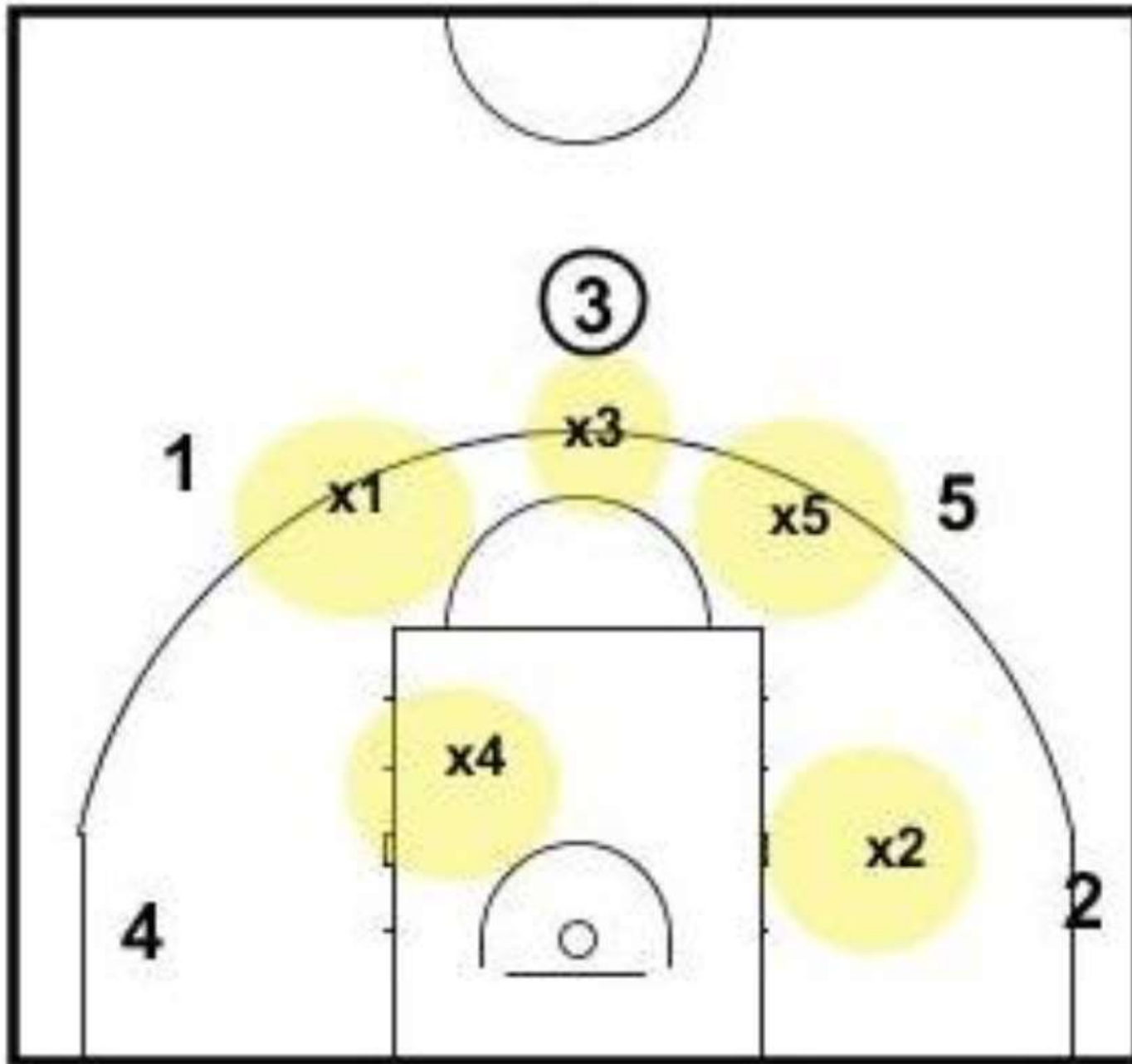


# GUARDING MANY OR GUARDING NO ONE?



# GUARDING MANY OR GUARDING NO ONE?

5



# PROVING IT IS A ZONE

## **Moving the Split / Help Line Defender**

To prove a defender is playing zone defense requires a specific movements from the offence. Here are some ways to do it:

### **Cutting to the ballside**

Once you have identified a defender that you think might be playing a zone, have a player cut to the ballside. This will require movement by the defender, as they cannot stay on the split line.

### **Move to the perimeter – ballside**

If the offensive player cuts to a post position, it may still be difficult to determine what defence is being played as many teams guard a post player from behind. By moving to the perimeter, the defender must leave the key – they do not have to be in a denial position, but they must be outside the key.

### **Cutting from low to high**

Having a player cut above the foul line forces the defender to step away from in front of the basket. Although the defender may stay on the split line, if the offensive player cuts as high as the top of the free throw circle, the defender must clearly react to the cut.

# PROVING IT IS A ZONE

## **Have player trail high in transition**

Quite commonly, a team's centre will run back to the basket once their team has lost possession. If the player they are guarding also runs straight down the court into a post position, then the defender can stay in the key!

However, if the offensive centre "trails" the break and stays high then once the ball reaches the wing, the defender must move away from the basket to guard their player.

## **Reverse the Ball**

Simply reversing the ball from one side of the court to the other requires the defence to move. This movement can help to identify who each defender is guarding (or whether they are playing a zone defence).

## **Pass and Cut to the Basket**

If the person passing the ball then makes a strong cut to the basket, it will quickly be obvious if their defender does not follow them.

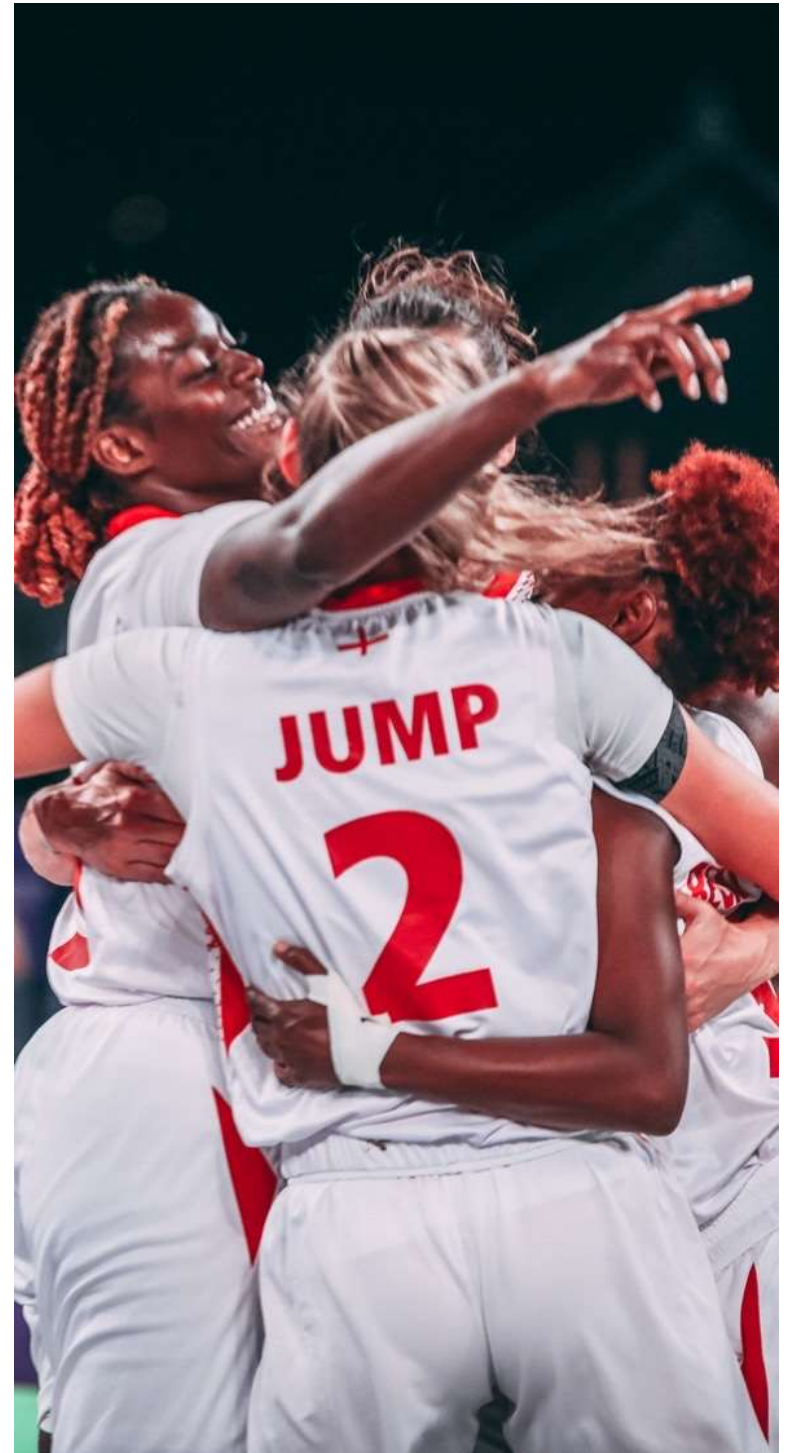
## **Overload the Ball Side**

By having players cut to the ballside, the defence needs to adjust. If the low weakside defender was to stay where they are, it would not be apparent who they were guarding!

# TYPICAL MAN-TO-MAN OFFENCES

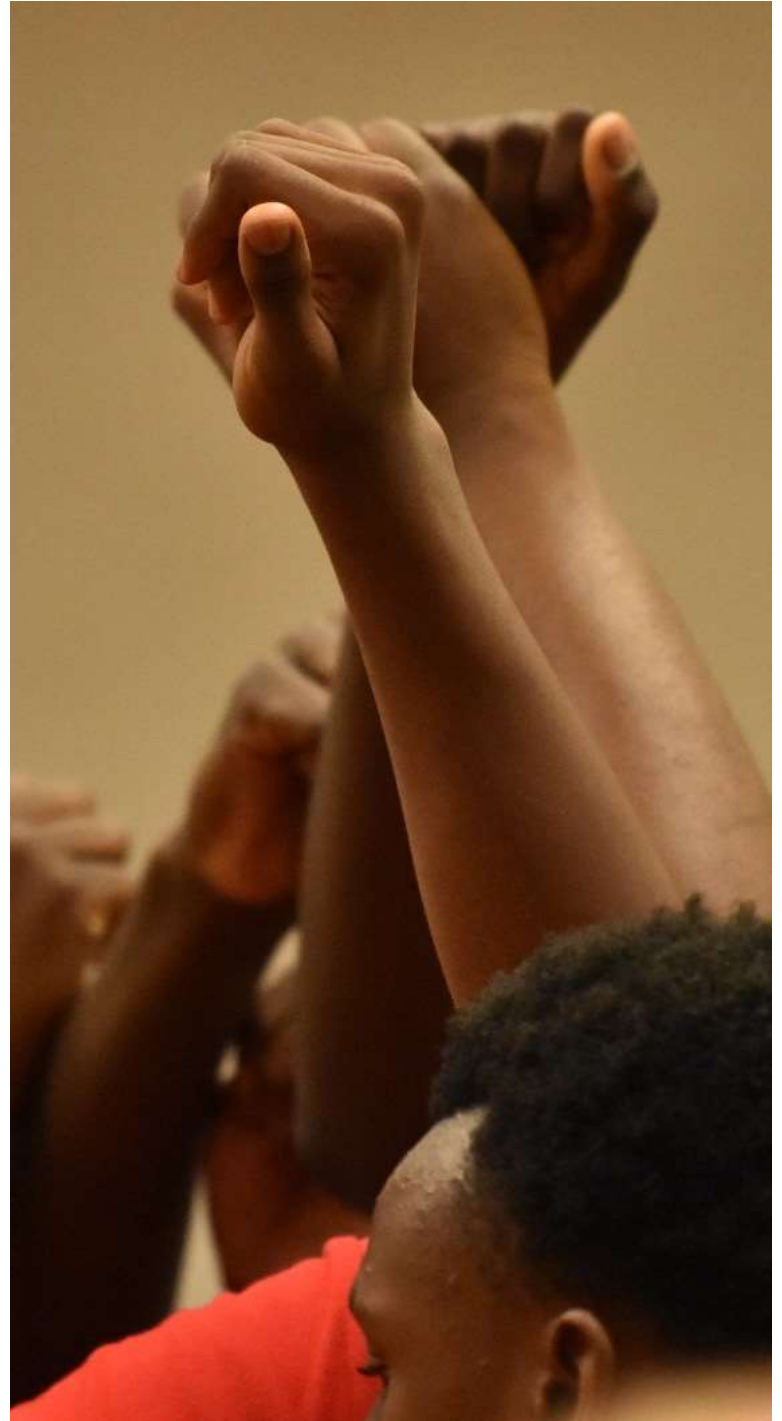
## Examples of Offensive Options:

- 5 Out
- 4 Out 1 In
- Horns
- Dribble Hand Off (Wing)
- High Pick & Roll



# GAME SITUATIONS THAT MAY OCCUR

- Full Court Pressing
- Zone Presses
- Half Court Trapping (run & jump)
- Double Teaming
- Box and One
- Triangle & Two



# WHAT COACHES ARE SAYING

*Thanks for coming back and look forward to seeing the video work particularly references to double team and focussed defence. We all know that a high percentage of coaches spend the vast majority of their time on offence however good defence is disproportionately match winning. I am all for stopping static defences marking space and denying penetration to the basket however I am all for highly mobile hard working defence putting pressure on the ball.*



# IN GAME SANCTIONS

## PROCESS

On recognition by an official, the crew chief will call an 'officials time out'. The Officials will meet with both coaches on centre line and give a verbal warning that they must cease playing a zone defence or a full court press, (which ever is applied at the time) and to remind the coach/(s) of the potential sanctions that will then be applied.

The coaches will then be given an additional 30 seconds to reinforce this message with their team.

Once play has resumed following the 'officials time out' any further breaches of the rule will result in the coach being issued a warning (W) technical foul in the first instance.

Once called the warning technical (W) will be recorded in the scorebook as a 'W' (not a coach or bench technical 'C' or 'B' ). The opposition will be given one free throw and then play will resume at half court.



# IN GAME SANCTIONS

Any further breaches of these rules will result in the coach receiving as normal a technical foul (this then recorded as normal 'C'. The opposition will be awarded one free throw.

A coach will not be ejected until they have received two recorded Coach technical fouls 'C's on a scoresheet.

A 'W' technical will not be counted as a formal technical (C) but the opposing team will receive the same one free throw.

To confirm :

COACH	W	C	----	No Ejection
-------	---	---	------	-------------

COACH	B	W	C	No Ejection
-------	---	---	---	-------------

COACH	W	C	C	Ejection
-------	---	---	---	----------

# ANY QUESTIONS?





**THANK YOU**

**#TOGETHERWEAREBASKETBALL**

**[WWW.BASKETBALLENGLAND.CO.UK](http://WWW.BASKETBALLENGLAND.CO.UK)**