

WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL



COACHING MANUAL

MARK WALKER

CONTENTS

1. Biography – Mark Walker	1
2. Introduction	2
3. Coaching	3
Philosophy	3
The Pyramid of Success	4
Coaching Styles	4
Communication	5
Discipline	5
Points of Emphasis/Don't just run Drills	5
Planning Effective Training Sessions	6
Basketball training Planning Sheet	7
Training for Peak Performance	8
Individual Players Evaluation	9
Final Thoughts	10
4. Classification of Athletes	11
IWBF Guidelines	11-17
5. Equipment	18
Wheelchair Set Up	18
Wheelchair set up and strapping by Tim Maloney	18
Common Sense Equipment	19-20
6. Chair Skills	20
Simple ways to improve Chair Skills	21
Individual Chair Skills Drills.....	21
Team Chair Skills Drills.....	21
7. Ball Handling	21
Ball Handling Drills	22
Pete Maravich Drills	22
General Ball Handling Drills	22
8. Passing	22
Reasons for dropped catches	23

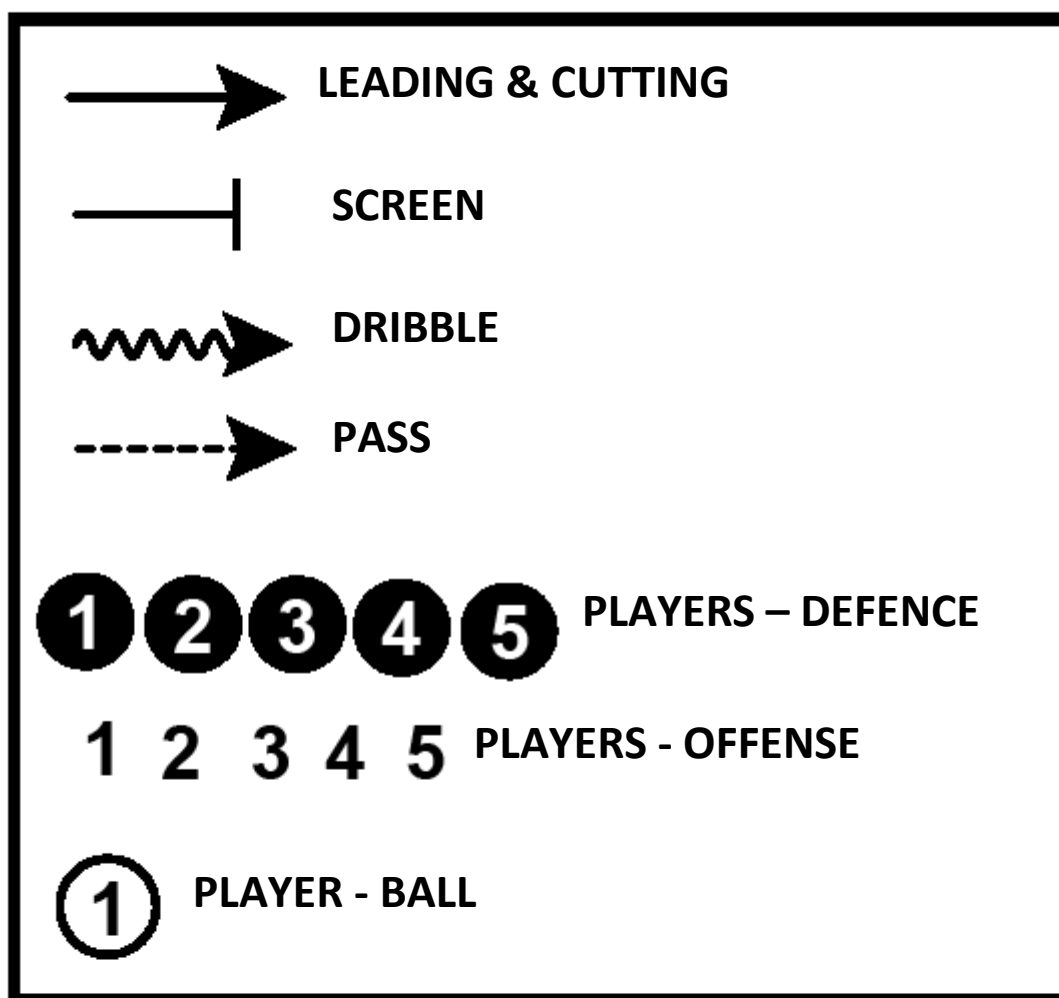
Some tips and advice on passing	23
Some tips on receiving the pass	23
Passing Drills	24
 9. Shooting	 25
Factors for poor shooting along with cures	25
Shooting technique	26
B.E.E.F	26-27
Roll Up Snap	27
Shooting Drills Individual	28
Short Range Game	28
Shooting Drills Team	28
Mid Range Game	29
Individual Shooting Drills	29
Team Shooting Drills	29-30
Long Range Game	30
 10. Multi skilling	 31
 11. Strength and Conditioning	 31
Recovery.....	31
Post recovery	32
Compression Clothing	32-33
Sleep	33
 12. Offense	 34-36
Transition	34-35
Half Court Offense – Observation	35
Final Thoughts	36
Offensive Checklist	37
Press Break Offense	37-38
Zone Offense	39-40
Man to Man Play Sets	41-44
Out of Bounds Plays – Baseline	45-47
Power	45
Double	46
Load	47
 13. Special Situations	 48

14.Defence	48-50
15.Conclusion	50

Wheelchair - Pg. 48

DIAGRAM KEY

LOUIS



Biography Coach Mark Walker

I started playing basketball at the age of 11 and had to make a choice between it and squash. I had a passion for both but in the end basketball became my first true love and carries through to this very day. I played elite junior and senior basketball and had some reasonable success yet injuries held me back from developing to my full potential. There wasn't great information around that time on conditioning your body properly and I suffered a great deal of pain and yet the passion for the sport grew every day. Even at a very young age I knew I would eventually become a coach and had some great mentors along the way and some very poor coaches who I learnt what I didn't want to be like. I fell into wheelchair basketball coaching really as it wasn't something I remotely had much of an idea about. I was recruited to coach via a quad rugby official who asked me would I be interested in coaching the Victorian State women's team. I used to coach a junior team on a court before the quad rugby came into play their competition. As it turned out I ended up coaching the men's team and we won an Australian National title beating a team that had won the last 5 in row. In my first stint as a wheelchair basketball coach I can honestly say I was trying all sorts of able bodied stuff that really was not all that effective, yet I was a very intense personality and it was more sheer will and a little smarts that dragged the team over the line. At the time I thought I did a fantastic job and was really getting a handle on this coaching of the wheelchair game.

I came back down to earth very quickly when I started coaching a club team in our National League, and we were soundly beaten in several games and this stimulated my thinking. What I was doing obviously wasn't working and I started to really look at everything I did in relation to preparation and the offenses we were running. Playing the game also helped develop me as a coach and that year of losing basically set up a system of play that would eventually take Australia to the Gold Medal. Out of some very negative and losing coaching situations huge positives emerged and I am sure you will experience similar things in your coaching. Setbacks are as much a part of coaching as they are in life and you can let them beat you down or adapt, improvise and eventually overcome. I coached the Australian Under23 team in Paris in 2009 and we were hit by a terrible virus in the week leading up to the tournament while in Great Britain playing practice games. For one of the games we only had 5 fit players out of the 12 on tour. The after effects of the virus left players washed out and tired with very little energy to play at their best in a World Championship. I felt we were the second best team there and yet we ended up playing for the Bronze Medal and were 15 points down in the last quarter. I asked for any and everything the players had left for one last effort and this must have stirred their passion as we fought and had a one point lead with 25 seconds to go and my 4.0 point big man with an easy shot under the basket to put us 3 points ahead. He missed the shot and Sweden came down and scored a perimeter shot with only seconds left. I was devastated after the loss and really flat with all the illness and lack of preparation, what could possibly be the positives from this. The answer came to me over the next 6 months as 10 of the 12 players went on to play senior representative basketball for Australia and to my knowledge this has never happened before that so many juniors have made it through to seniors in such a short period of time. I am still looking to increase my knowledge base and the passion still burns deep within.

INTRODUCTION

This coaching manual is designed for coaches and players and will cover a broad range of topics to increase your knowledge and skill level. We should all be striving to advance our understanding of this dynamic game of wheelchair basketball and I personally think there is so much more that we can learn.

In able bodied basketball there have been very few advances over the last 20 years apart from humans getting taller, stronger, faster and apart from great break throughs in injury rehabilitation and footwear, little much as really changed. There are very few new ideas in the able bodied game and yet I personally feel wheelchair basketball has barely scratched the surface in its development of equipment, and the full scope of playing the game at higher levels.

It is my aim to arm as many coaches and players with the tools to expand not only their skills, but also stimulate the creativity that we humans are so talented at exploiting given the power of our own imaginations. What a privilege it has been for me to work with so many wonderful athletes, coaches, officials and administrators over the past 18 years. I can truly say it has been an amazing journey and some of my happiest and most memorable moments have been involved in wheelchair basketball.

My love and passion for the game has grown through coaching, playing (yes I played several years to help my understanding of game and found it was incredible fun also) and program building. All have played important roles in my own development and I implore everyone to become students of the game and share their knowledge with everyone that they can. Ideas on better training methods, systems of play and psychology can come from simple exchanges from likeminded people or modifying a drill to make it a more effective component of your teams training.

I heard a great saying the other day

GOOD, BETTER, BEST, NEVER LET IT REST,

UNTIL THE GOOD IS BETTER, AND UNTIL THE BETTERS BEST

What a great way to approach anything you do in life by constantly advancing yourself and everyone around you. Now you will face obstacles, barriers and a host of challenges that will not always be pleasant and positive. Hang in there, set your goals high and dream big dreams. I was told it was impossible to win a medal, let alone a Gold one at the Paralympics in Atlanta as all we had was a bunch of amateur players and a kid fresh out of college. We were given no chance as we were playing against some of the best professionals who have ever played this great game. All I could think of as coach was winning a Gold Medal and put all my energy and thought into its achievement. It is truly amazing the power of a dream and I had a team of athletes who refused to surrender and our passion and commitment to each other carried us through to the sports highest honour.

The journey is not over, not by a long way and I am grateful that I can share my knowledge and experience with you and play a small part in your journey. Please feel free to share your thoughts with me at clinics or via email at goldmedalcoach@yahoo.com as any information can be modified or tailored to help athletes and coaches alike.

COACHING

As a Coach we take on so many roles (teacher, leader, mentor, parent figure, friend, confidant, adviser, motivator, first aid person, transport manager, disciplinarian, cheerleader, etcetera, etcetera) well above just turning up to coach the team. With this in mind I think it is important that I list the following attributes that you may find helpful.

Philosophy – From the moment you enter a basketball court as a player, coach and official, or even as a spectator you will start to formulate your philosophy about the game, and the best way it should be played. You see what ever becomes important to you will be reflected in the teams you coach. Your own personal values and what you see as the right and wrong way to do certain things will all play a part in your philosophy and coaching style. It is important to be an evolving and advancing coach and constantly find better ways to improve everything we do in relation to the game. Your philosophy will help you make decisions on what to adopt and what doesn't work for you and the teams you coach.

Examples of philosophies are the style of game you want the players you coach to play. Will it be a fast paced aggressive game always attacking or more a tempo controlled game looking to slow the game and be far more deliberate with ball movement and decisions. Sometimes your philosophy will have to alter and change to adjust for the athletes you work with and the level of experience they have. Change is inevitable and if we are the same person we were 10, 5, or even 1 year ago then our development as a coach will also be stalled and stifled.

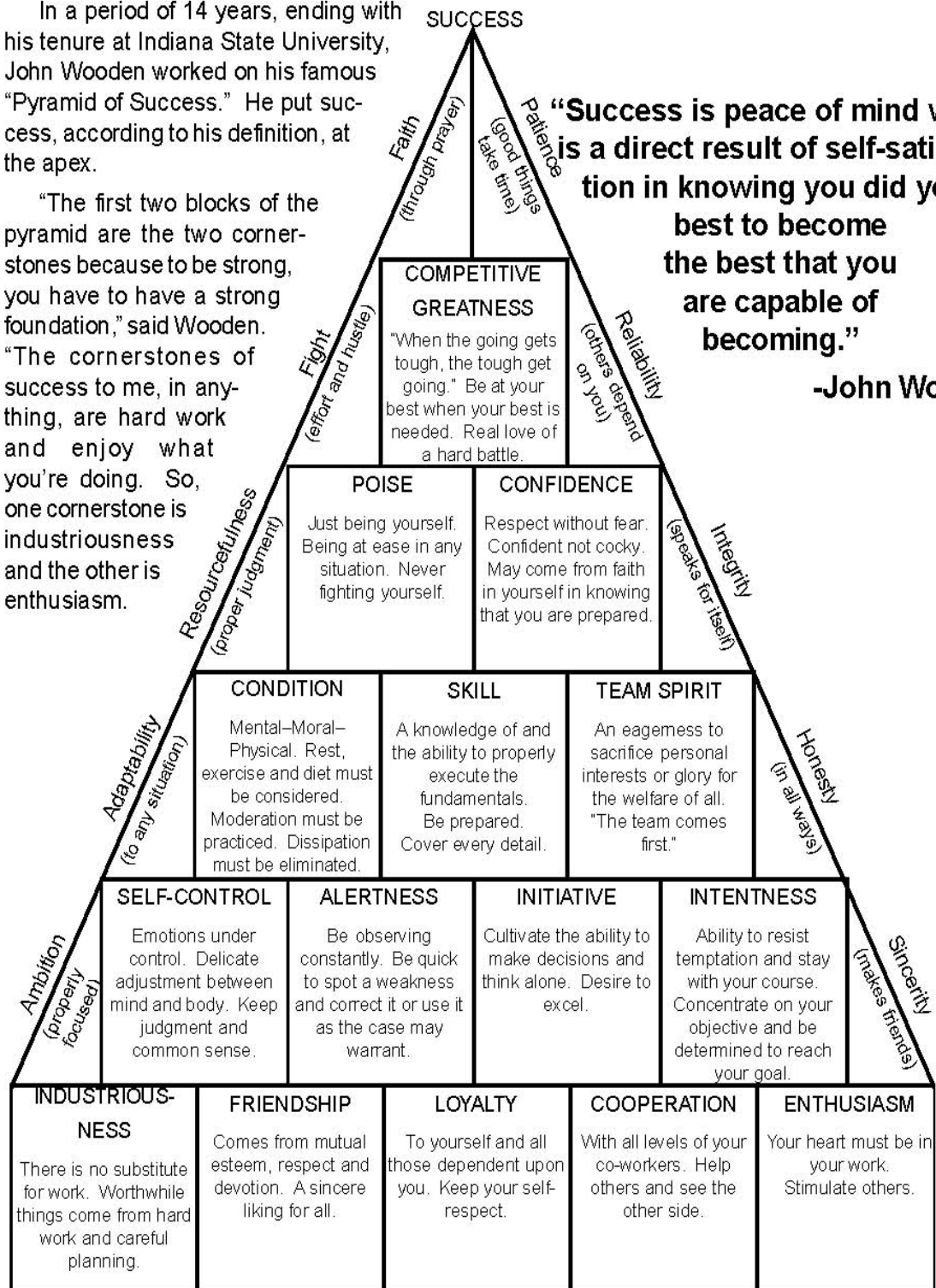
My philosophy the EDGE is simple and has proven the test of time over several campaigns. What exactly does the EDGE consist of? It has always been a part of my coaching career and in simple terms it breaks down every facet of what the game is all about and then sets out to make small improvements to achieve a significant overall gain. I subscribe to the principal of if you want to be great, just do small things in a great way. I really love the quote from Golden Rule Jones – What I want for myself I want for everybody. What a great philosophy to live your life and coaching by – What I want for myself I want for everybody. I want every player, coach, program and club that I work with to have the very best in their life and experience the great joy that comes from hard work, dedication, attention to detail, getting stronger and forging break throughs in greater health and skill levels. As a coach it is my responsibility to do everything I can to help improve the players I work with. The players don't work for you they work with you, and you need to build solid relationships in order to help them reach their playing goals.

One of the greatest basketball coaches of all time John Wooden had an amazing philosophy that he lived by and imparted to all he coached. The Pyramid of Success is a masterpiece and some of the greatest philosophy ever written. I would suggest you study this Pyramid in great detail and internalise it into your subconscious. Give the Pyramid of Success to all your players, family and pass it all in your club, what a great piece of literature.

John Wooden's Pyramid of Success

In a period of 14 years, ending with his tenure at Indiana State University, John Wooden worked on his famous "Pyramid of Success." He put success, according to his definition, at the apex.

"The first two blocks of the pyramid are the two cornerstones because to be strong, you have to have a strong foundation," said Wooden. "The cornerstones of success to me, in anything, are hard work and enjoy what you're doing. So, one cornerstone is industriousness and the other is enthusiasm."



Coaching Styles – There are so many coaching styles (from loud and aggressive personalities to quiet, relaxed and rather sedate type attitudes) that have all won major titles at one time or another. What works for one coach will not necessarily work for you. My best advice is to just be you (to thy own self be true) and educate yourself and coach as much as possible to gain experience and expertise. A deep respect will come from the team or squad when they put their trust in you that you can help them become better basketball players.

Communication – For effective communication we need to understand that we are all different and everyone has different ways of interpreting things that are said to us. An example of this would be giving a verbal instruction to a squad of players and everyone could have a different view on the information you're trying to impart to them. As a coach I am always asking questions of players to find out where they're at in their thinking and understanding of everything that is being taught.

The following is a great guideline and will serve you well if adopted.

Athletes Learn:

10% when they hear

20% when they see

70% when they do

The Laws of Learning:

Explanation

Demonstration

Repetition

Discipline – Establishing discipline will become very important in the development of your team and individual players. Having the respect of the players will go a long way in the teaching process and in creating a great environment where everyone is working together in a shared purpose. Some coaches set their own rules and others let the players set them. Either approach is good provided that any penalties are strictly enforced, with no favouritism shown to any particular player regardless of ability. When players decide on their own rules you will usually find they will be far harder on themselves than the coach or manager. I would suggest that any coach coming into a new coaching situation start out a great deal firmer in the beginning as it is far easier to tone down, than to suddenly become more aggressive. Players will see through this and respect will soon be lost as a result. Again be firm, but not unfriendly and maintain a sense of fairness in your dealings with all players and eventually you will develop a great rhythm with each other and have a great working relationship. Your rules can be as simple as turning up to practice and games before the schedule start time to rosters of maintaining equipment and a dress code, along with silence while coach is addressing the squad and assignments of players given the responsibility to lead various drills.

Points of Emphasis / Don't just run Drills – A big mistake many coaches make is they focus far too much on getting the perfect drills and making sure the players are running said drill properly. I tend to take the attitude that it's not what you are running that is important, but what you emphasize that is the real key to a player and team's improvement. What good are drills that have players not executing good fundamentals or that lack real intensity. Basketball can be summed up with 2 simple words Habits and Decisions. The Habits that a player adopts good or bad and the Decisions they make will have a huge impact on the result of the game. Unlike school where you get the lessons first and then get tested, basketball is the exact opposite where you get the test and then the lesson follows and as experience builds decisions should get wiser over the course of time. Allowing players at training to get sloppy and lazy with their basic fundamentals will result in bad habits following them into games along with not correcting poor decisions made during practice. The coach as the leader sets the tone for training and being a Points of Emphasis Coach rather than a good Drill Runner will be a vital key to your team's improvement and success.

Planning Effective Training Sessions – Well planned training sessions will be essential to your team and each player's development. We have all heard the saying "You don't plan to fail, you fail to plan" and so it is with basketball coaching. With your training plans try to incorporate a system of high intensity, followed by low intensity drills, and throw in the odd fun drill to keep spirits high. There needs to be a fair amount of repetition built into every session and yet this can be disguised in several different yet similar drills. The following points will help you plan productive training sessions Have a definite Plan for the session and outline this to the players during a pre training meeting.

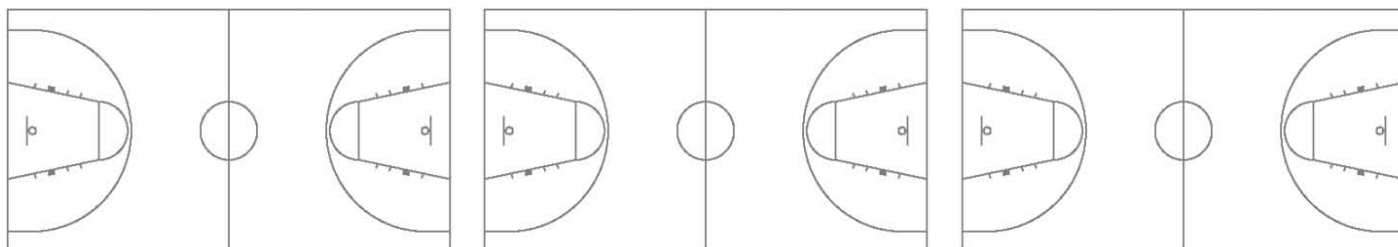
- 1) Keep drills sharp and to set time limits (3-5 minutes unless it is scrimmage). Never allow a drill to labour trying to make it perfect as you can always come back to it in a future session or possibly change to a better drill teaching the same principal.**
- 2) High intensity followed by low intensity drills to simulate what happens in games and to condition athletes' anaerobic ally.**
- 3) Introduce any new plays or additions to plays early in the session before players have a chance to get fatigued as minds will be sharper and alert to new things. Have players give you written homework on all your plays and concepts. This will re enforce all the concepts you are teaching and will give you an idea, how much the athletes are learning.**
- 4) Keep explanations as brief and as simple as possible and use the guidelines set out in the communication section**
- 5) Coach throughout the session giving feedback to players in the form of encouragement, correction and instruction. Work harder than your players and maintain the intensity.**
- 6) If you have assistant coaches utilize their skills in the preparation of the team and ask for their feedback and work as a unit.**
- 7) Once a player has a good grasp of what you are teaching and can demonstrate this to other players have them do this rather than you. This will promote some leadership along with a little competition within the group to also master the skill.**
- 8) Be as demanding as possible of all players and push them to higher and consistent efforts. They will pick up on what is important to you and make it one of their priorities.**
- 9) Make sure to keep all players hydrated as dehydration will leave you with tired players and lack lustre training sessions.**
- 10) Make your training session balanced incorporating skills, plays and defensive work that fits with your philosophy.**
- 11) Design shooting drills that are competitive and combine as much practice as possible where the player will get their game shots.**
- 12) Training should always be much harder than the game. This will make players mentally tougher and give them great confidence when facing strong opposition.**
- 13) Try to use as many key words as possible rather than long winded explanations. Players will pick up on the key words and if this has been drilled enough at training they should respond.**
- 14) Never take anything for granted that players understand everything. Make all players aware of the roles they will play on the team.**

On the next page is a sample of a training plan sheet or you can create specific ones to suit your teams' needs and available times.

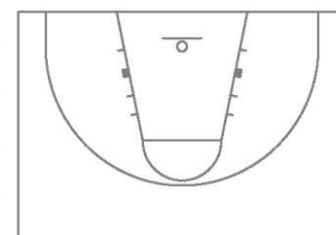
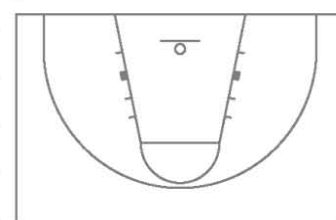
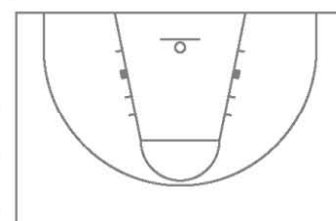
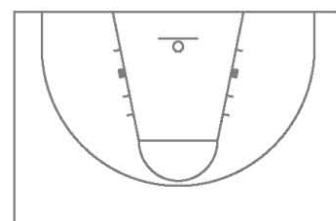
Basketball Practice Plan

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____ Number _____

Pre-Practice _____



5 min _____
 10 min _____
 15 min _____
 20 min _____
 25 min _____
 30 min _____
 35 min _____
 40 min _____
 45 min _____
 50 min _____
 55 min _____
 60 min _____
 65 min _____
 70 min _____
 75 min _____
 80 min _____
 85 min _____
 90 min _____



Points of Emphasis _____

Next Game – Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____ Vs: _____

Next Practice – Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Absentees _____

Notes _____

Training for Peak Performance – Over the course of the year you will need to adopt a scientific approach to improve your basketball program. This will involve training your athletes on a cyclical basis that keeps them fit and healthy and motivated to keep working hard. Never underestimate the affect diet and strength and conditioning can have on your team’s progress.

The following points will help take your team’s performance to more desirable levels.

- 1) During the off season athletes should be building up their strength with a solid weight training program along with an aerobic program to increase stamina. For those athletes with a poor shooting or a low shooting base (inexperienced player new to the game), it is a priority to complete a strong skills program set out by the coach. This should include ball handling drills and have a strong emphasis on developing the off hand.**
- 2) Have a solid preseason program that eases the athletes back into hard training without breaking down their bodies.**
- 3) The first third of the season there should be the heaviest increase in workload and get as much structured training and teaching done as possible while the athletes are still fresh.**
- 4) The middle third of the season should see a slight tapering of workload with strong teaching concepts.**
- 5) The last third of the season should see further tapering with refinement of skills and concepts learnt during the season.**
- 6) Injury prevention should be part of every training phase with all athletes developing strong rotator cuffs and AC joints.**
- 7) A well balanced diet and adequate rest and recovery could be the vital edge your team takes into this and future seasons.**
- 8) Players and coaches should avoid comparing themselves to others as this can be self-defeating and demoralising. One should only try to be better than oneself as this will be a true measure of improvement and proof that you’re advancing and not in decline.**
- 9) Give players tasks (homework) to do away from training. This could involve skill work, strength and conditioning or even simply writing out your teams play sets and defensive concepts just so you have a good grasp that what your teaching is registering in the player’s thoughts. If it is not in the players thinking it will seldom be produced on court.**
- 10) Players should strive to play above their points and guard players defensively in the next point class. This involves maximising every available muscle to improve performance.**
- 11) A regular social get together away from the training and game environment to promote strong bonds and friendships.**
- 12) It takes 25-30 days to create new habits and break bad ones. It starts now!!!!**

Players should be evaluated at least 3 times during the course of the season as it is important that players have a solid guide to their progress or lack thereof. I am a great believer in telling players the truth and the evaluation form on the next page will serve coaches and players in keeping track on many aspects of the athletes’ skill base and game performance. The form on the next page is simple to use and will be a great addition to your coaching tools of the trade. Players need constant feedback and nothing is more powerful than the written word as anything you say will only have a 5 per cent retention rate after only a week. Regular feedback and evaluations are important factors in your team giving their best or peak performance.

Player Performance Evaluation

NOTE: It is important to understand this review is based on your performance during the evaluation period. It does not reflect your ability to succeed in the game of basketball. It is simply a tool for improvement.

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Age: _____ Points: _____ Reviewer: _____ Date: _____

Playing Experience: _____

Awards/Recognition: _____

Shooting Strength

____ Mechanics & Arc **
____ Range 2 point
____ Range 3 point
____ Catch & Shoot
____ Shoot off dribble
____ Back to Basket
____ Use of weak hand
____ Rebounding **

Dribbling Strength

____ Goes both ways
____ Sees the floor **
____ Handles pressure
____ Speed
____ Dribbles with purpose
____ Under control **
____ Penetrates to hoop
____ Ability to finish

Passing Strength

____ Vision **
____ Court sense
____ Turnovers
____ Play maker
____ Catches well **
____ 2 handed
____ 1 handed
____ Overhead

Individual Strength

____ Attitude **
____ Accept criticism **
____ Cooperation **
____ Work ethic **
____ Team play **
____ Chair Skills
____ Speed
____ Quickness

Defensive Strength

____ On the ball
____ Off the ball
____ Transition **
____ Help
____ Recover to man
____ Close out
____ Anticipation **
____ Team concepts **

Overall Strength

____ Scorer
____ Rebounder
____ Defender
____ Play maker
____ Understands game
____ Sets screens
____ Cuts/Uses screens
____ Asset to team **

Overall Evaluation

** = 15 Key Evaluations

5 = Solid

4 = Average

3 = OK

2 = Needs improvement

1 = Needs more development at a lower level

Comments: _____

Final Thoughts – My first basketball coach had never played the game and yet he was the greatest coach I had ever had teaching me more in 8 months than all my other coaches did over the next 10 years. He was an ex-army drill Sergeant with a big barrelled chest and a booming voice you could hear several suburbs away, and was truly remarkable person in so many ways. Coach Baker inspired me to become a coach and I often think back to those times of hard training and the discipline and drive he gave to all that played under him. As coaches we have a great opportunity to touch people's lives and help them achieve great deeds or simply feel good about themselves getting out and participating in a healthy activity. The beauty of the game of basketball is that it is a shared experienced which can comfort you through the lows and makes the highs far more enjoyable. My time spent with wheelchair athletes has been an incredible journey taking me around the world and all the athletes share a far tighter bond than their able bodied cousins. I remember sharing wonderful story times with some really colourful personalities and many times found myself laughing until I thought my insides would crack.

The culture of your Basketball Team and Club will be directed and nurtured by the Head Coach. You must set good examples and be proactive in setting the standards that you expect from everyone involved in the Program. It is a well-known fact that players that come from solid Programs far out perform their rivals. A Basketball Program should be in a constant state of evolution and continually striving to advance and improve every aspect and become a bench mark by which all programs can only hope to achieve.

One last thought that I touched on in point 15 in productive training sessions. I was at the pre Paralympics tournament in Canada and the team Captain came to me and told me several players were having big problems understanding their roles within the team. I was truly shocked after all the hard training and preaching I thought I had spelled all this out during all our sessions. Never take it for granted that your players know what you want. Keep asking questions and define their roles on a regular basis. I sat down with all the players at a team meeting and calmly and in very simple terms made all players aware of not only their roles but that of their team mates. This gave the team a great deal of confidence heading to Atlanta and taking their place in history as Australia's first Gold Medal winning wheelchair basketball team.

It is my privilege to impart as much knowledge and hopefully a little motivation and inspiration to everyone that coaches and plays wheelchair basketball. We should all be forward thinking coaches, players and officials and advance the development of the sport around the world.

CLASSIFICATION OF ATHLETES

One area which should be of great interest to all coaches and athletes alike is the classification system. It can be devastating to an athlete to be under a false impression their at a certain points level and then get the news they have been classified up a half or a full point to where they felt they should be. On the other side it can be a real boost to a team if the points come in slightly lower which can truly benefit the team by allowing greater number of high point players on court.

All though I am not a classifier, after working with wheelchair athletes for a long period of time you get to be a fairly good judge of where players are in their points range. You also should have local classifiers come in and give you their opinions also. Having stated all this when a player goes to a tournament where they will be officially classified by the guidelines set out below, anything can happen which can be a bonus or a tragedy. A good lesson here is to never take a player to a competition that hasn't been classified and then rely on them just to get your team on the floor. I have seen this sad situation at international tournaments where a team had 3 players well over the point's classification they were expecting.

My advice to players is to forget about your classification as you have little control over what the classifiers as a group will decide. Concentrate on making yourself the best player you can be and let your basketball skills dictate your future as a player.

Classification Overview IWBF Guidelines

The classification of wheelchair basketball players has evolved significantly over the past 10 years. No longer is it necessary to individually examine each player in a medical room, debating about the relative grades of single muscles, and making subjective assessments of the balance attributes of a player before assigning them to a given class. Players are now classified in their playing environment, on the basketball court, and in they're playing wheelchair. This enables the classifier to assess each player, as they will be when taking part in the actual competition.

Classification Philosophy:

Wheelchair basketball classification is based on the players' functional capacity to complete the skills necessary to play - pushing, pivoting, shooting, rebounding, dribbling, passing and catching. It is not an assessment of a player's level of skill, merely their functional capacity to complete the task. In particular, the trunk movement and stability observed during these actual basketball situations, forms the basis for the assignment of a player to a particular class.

Classes:

Players are assigned points as their classification - 1, 2, 3, and 4 are the recognized classes, with 0.5 classes between for the exceptional cases which do not fit exactly into one class, and the 4.5 category for the player with least or minimal disability.

Volume of Action:

Classes are defined according to players' "volume of action". Each class has a clearly defined maximal volume of action, which the player may exhibit. The volume of action refers to the extremes to which a player's trunk stability will allow them to reach, without holding on to the wheelchair, before overbalancing.

Class Characteristics:

Each class has characteristics unique to that class, which are used by the classifier. These characteristics are evident in each of the basketball skills observed as part of the classification process.

How to Classify:

Players are observed in their competition wheelchairs, complete with all strapping they will use, but in a training situation before the tournament commences. From this initial observation a player is assigned a class with which they will begin the tournament. The player is then observed in an actual competition game, at which time their classification will be confirmed or modified if the classification panel feels it is necessary. Only a new player who has not been previously Internationally classified need undergo this process. Players holding an International card do not require re-classification at each tournament they attend.

Team Balance:

The total number of points allowed on court at any time is 14.0. That is, the total points of all five players actually playing. If a coach allows the team to have over 14.0 points, they will incur a technical foul on the bench.

Function	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Class 4.5
Typical Disability	T1-T7 paraplegia without abdominal muscle control Post-polio paralysis with arm involvement and without control of trunk musculature.	T8-L1 paraplegia. Post-polio paralysis without control of lower extremity movement.	L2-L4 paraplegia, with control of hip flexion and adduction movements, but without control of hip extension or abduction. Post-polio paralysis with minimal control of lower extremity movements. Hip disarticulation or above-knee amputees with very short residual limbs.	L5-S1 paraplegia, with control of hip abduction and extension movements on at least one side. Post-polio paralysis with one leg involvement. Hemipelvectomy. Single above- knee amputees with short residual limbs. Most double above-knee amputees. Some double below-knee amputees.	Single below-knee amputees. Some double below-knee amputees. Players with extensive orthopaedic involvement of hips, knees or ankles. Post-polio paralysis with minimal (ankle/foot) involvement on one or both sides

Function	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Class 4.5
Dribbling	Usually performed at the side on the wheelchair with trunk instability and slow acceleration. Some players may dribble in front of the footrests while resting the trunk on elevated knees for stability.	Usually dribbles the ball beside the front castors, particularly when starting when this action is often accompanied by an initial loss of stability. Some players may dribble directly in front of the front castors especially when the trunk is supported by high placement of the knees.	Can dribble the ball in front of the castors with one hand while simultaneously accelerating at a rapid rate by pushing forcefully with the other hand. The trunk flexes forcefully forward in the direction of the dribble.	Can dribble the ball well in front of the front castors while pushing with the other hand. Can accomplish rapid speed and direction changes without loss of trunk stability during dribbling.	Same as Class 4

Function	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Class 4.5
Shooting	Significant loss of stability in the trunk as the shooting arm is extended over the head during follow through, often requiring arm support following the shot. During a two-handed shot, the trunk makes contact with the back of the wheelchair. Loses trunk stability during minimal contact.	Mild to moderate loss of stability in the lower trunk during arm elevation and follow through, resulting in movement of the lower trunk away from the back of the wheelchair. Able to rotate the trunk toward the basket while shooting with both hands.	Excellent stability of the trunk while sitting upright, particularly in follow-through of the shot. The trunk moves toward the basket with shooting movement, without loss of stability.	Is able to move the trunk forcefully in the direction of the follow-through after shooting. Can lean laterally or rotate with a lateral lean to at least one side (away from the defender), while keeping both hands elevated and in contact with the ball.	Is able to move the trunk forcefully in all directions during shooting, including lateral lean and lateral lean with rotation to both sides while keeping both hands in contact with the ball.

Function	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Class 4.5
Passing	A forceful one-handed pass requires grasping with the off hand to maintain stability. The two-handed chest pass can only be executed with support of the back of the wheelchair or by resting on elevated knees. Unable to rotate to receive an over-the-shoulder pass without using one hand on wheelchair or leg to turn trunk.	Little to moderate loss of trunk stability during one and two-handed passing, requiring holding the wheelchair or leg with the off hand. Fair stability when catching passes in an upright position. Is able to rotate the trunk to receive an over-the-shoulder pass with two hands using some support of the back of the wheelchair.	One-handed and two-handed passes can be executed without using arm or back support to maintain stability. Can exert force in passing by trunk extension before initiating trunk flexion movement. Able to achieve near maximal rotation to catch over-the-shoulder passes with both hands without support of the back of the wheelchair.	Able to flex, extend and rotate the trunk maximally while performing both one-handed and two-handed passes. Able to lean laterally to at least one side while executing a two-handed pass in the same lateral direction.	Able to move the trunk in all directions with good stability while passing. Able to lean to either side while executing a two-handed pass in the same lateral direction.

Function	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Class 4.5
Pushing the Wheelchair	In an upright position, the player leans into the back of the wheelchair, with head movement forward and back with each push. Some players rest the flexed trunk on elevated knees for support while pushing, away from the back of the wheelchair.	Able to push the wheelchair without total support of the back of the wheelchair. Some loss of stability noted primarily at waist level with forward movement of the upper trunk accompanying each pushing motion, without movement of the lower trunk.	Able to push the wheelchair forcefully with no loss of anterior or posterior stability. Upper and lower trunk move as a unit in exerting force during pushing movements. Pushing movement is usually with legs together.	Able to push and stop the wheelchair with rapid acceleration and maximal forward movement of the trunk. Pushing movement is usually with legs apart.	Same as Class 4

Function	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Class 4.5
Rebounding	<p>Almost always reaches with one hand while holding the wheelchair to stabilize trunk with opposite hand.</p> <p>If a player uses two hands over the head, he will be in contact with the back of the wheelchair and easily lose stability during minimal contact.</p>	<p>Usually rebounds with one hand, with minimal to moderate loss of stability.</p> <p>Two-handed over the head rebounds can be executed but are often accompanied by moderate loss of stability, especially during contact.</p>	<p>Can rebound forcefully with two hands from overhead by moving the trunk forward while reaching for the ball.</p> <p>Limited stability during reaching laterally for rebounding; often executed by holding the side of the wheelchair with the off hand.</p>	<p>Can lean forward and to at least one side to grasp an over-the-head rebound with both hands.</p>	<p>Can lean forward or to either side with arms overhead to grasp the ball.</p>

Function	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Class 4.5
Optimal Wheelchair Positioning	<p>Knees higher than hips.</p> <p>Knees strapped together or thighs and legs strapped to the wheelchair.</p> <p>Wheelchair back to mid-thoracic height, with upholstery slightly loosened to provide support for unstable trunk.</p> <p>May gain considerable stability by strapping upper trunk to wheelchair back.</p>	<p>Knees higher than hips.</p> <p>Knees strapped together.</p> <p>Wheelchair back to waist level or slightly higher.</p> <p>May find it helpful to strap lower trunk to wheelchair back.</p>	<p>Knees slightly higher than hips.</p> <p>Low wheelchair back, below waist level, allowing for full trunk rotation.</p>	<p>May benefit from positioning of knees slightly higher than hips for maximal wheelchair mobility and speed.</p> <p>Alternatively, may position knees at same height as hips to achieve maximal height advantage.</p> <p>Low wheelchair back, allowing for full trunk rotation.</p> <p>Wearing leg braces or prostheses or strapping to the wheelchair seat may increase stability.</p>	<p>Same as Class 4.</p>

EQUIPMENT

WHEELCHAIR SET UP

Before a player even starts to train seriously for wheelchair basketball they need to look at how they're set up in their sports chair. An athlete must set themselves up for maximum balance, speed, agility and manoeuvrability. They may need to use one or several straps and you will find low to mid point player's will wedge themselves into their chair to minimize the sway factor of limited stomach muscle control. A well balanced athlete can be an asset to any team and athletes should try out several chairs and speak to experienced players in their points class before undertaking the expensive option of spending a great deal of money on something that your really not suitable for.

High point players have to make decisions on whether to sit up at maximum height or possibly sacrifice height for far more manoeuvrability. My advice to smaller mid and high point players is to set yourself up to play as quickly as possible, as position is a big factor and the player with the superior position will usually win the contest.

Chair set up & strapping by Tim Maloney

- Six wheels for better stability and recovery for all classes
- Large camber (18 - 20 degrees) gives you better stability at speed for turning, good for fast perimeter players
- Camber of 16 – 18 degrees for your slashing inside players to get though gaps better and still allows for good chair control and turning
- Rear wheel location is very important. The further the axle is forward of your hips, it gives you greater turning ability and when combined with the right camber can allow you to sit high and be very manoeuvrable with a good ability to tilt with control
- The right chair set up for the right type of players game and points is very important
- Sitting lower for 1 & 2 point players is an advantage as you can use elbows on the wheels for control when you have the ball
- A reclining backrest is good for low point players who are good outside shots as it opens up the chest for a better shooting technique
- For the faster low point player who is not a big outside shooting threat and does more picking, more of a bucket with strapping is good as you have better balance and control
- Many new strapping techniques are now legal for all classes and most don't affect the points of the players

COMMON SENSE EQUIPMENT

The following is a common sense list of equipment that every player should bring with them to training, regular season games and tournaments.

- 1) A minimum of 2 Spare Wheels with inflated tyres that is ready for a quick exchange, along with a decent wheel bag. Spare tyres and inner tubes along with a tool kit to fit them. Some teams have a pump but it's not a bad idea to carry your own pump. Always carry essential spare parts.
- 2) A first aid kit with any medications you need but more importantly most athletes will carry strapping tape along with a few band aids and other products to help with cuts and blisters.
- 3) Spare straps just in case they break and for teams at tournaments spare tops in case of the blood rule.
- 4) Each player should have their own basketball that is used by the League in which they play. As a shooter myself I know how important it is to get used to the feel and the weight of a basketball. There are quite significant differences between the various brands of basketballs and the competitive advantage will always go to the player that practices with the League ball.
- 5) A sports bag to carry a player's water bottles (never share fluids with any other player), first aid kit, spare tops and other equipment.
- 6) Do a monthly check on all equipment and make sure you check your tyre pressure before every training session and game.

The coaches' equipment list

- 1) **WHISTLE** – Some coaches never use a whistle at training and I tend to use it less as players move up in age groups. With younger players however the need to get their attention is paramount, if you're to maintain a learning environment. Like the Air Hostess says "the whistle is there to attract attention". I use it to keep the session under control. It is also great for changing movements during a drill.
- 2) **BASKETBALLS** – you should have at least 2-4 quality basketball similar to the ones your league uses in the games. This will get players used to the size and weight of the ball and hopefully the end results being an improved shooting performance in games. I encourage players to bring their own basketballs ideally a ball for everyone will enhance skill development at training.
- 3) **COLORED BIBS** – At training you will often want to create game situations and scrimmages or practice matches. Coloured bibs will help this process with younger athletes as they will recognize a single colour far easier than 2-4 team mates you have just picked for their now newly formed team. My club has reversible tops that we play in which most players wear at training. I also carry coloured bibs, but you can have your athletes wear a light/dark t-shirt with a contrasting light/dark singlet.
- 4) **CONES** – A useful item to help you run drills that require players to head to areas of the court, along with dribbling and shooting drills.
- 5) **DRIBBLE GOGGLES** – One of the most valuable skills you can teach players is to keep their heads up during the game. Dribble goggles are simple plastic goggles that will keep eyes up, making it difficult to look down unless hunched right over. Heads down play can cost a team dearly in lost opportunities to make easy passes and score baskets. Heads down dribble can make players very selfish and destroy team work. These goggles are inexpensive and will be a great addition in helping your player's foster good habits.

- 6) A decent First Aid Kit to cover the majority of minor cuts, abrasions, along with some ice packs and keep it well stock
- 7) A coaching folder to cover the entire season. This will contain the following
 - 1: Players contact details
 - 2: Seasons schedule including League Games and Tournaments
 - 3: Player Evaluation Forms **
 - 4: Training Plans **
 - 5: Team and Individual Goal Sheets **
 - 6: Game Statistic Sheets
 - 7: Game Evaluation Sheets
 - 8: Players Home Work Sheets
 - 9: Skills Check List to keep track of your player's development
 - 10: Core offensive Plays, Out of Bounds Plays, Special Plays
 - 11: Miscellaneous Folder for articles on Motivation
 - 12: Notes

Your coaching folder will keep you organised and maintain a focus for the entire season. You can use the sheets provided in this training manual or create forms that suit the team or program you're working with. You can modify or expand on the 12 items listed, whatever you decide make sure you keep a thorough record of your season and this will serve as a valuable reference for future seasons as you look back and track both players and the teams improvement. It will also serve your club as a permanent record and help for planning future seasons, as you cannot make future decisions only present decisions that affect the future.

CHAIR SKILLS

Chair Skills are the able bodied equivalent to footwork and will be a major component of your team's success or failure to control their wheelchairs will help you control both the tempo and the court space I have always been of the belief that on offense you create space and on defence you take space away from your opponent. Creating space requires making great leads and strong, aggressive cuts and the ability to make perimeter shots, along with setting effective screens will all contribute. Defensively you want to make your opponents feel like they're playing in a confined area by constant ball pressure, denying cuts and screens and contesting every possible shot. All players' have to understand that they play the majority of the game without the ball and you will only have it in your hands for 5-15% of the total game depending on the position you play within the structure of the offense. With all this in mind the ability to control the wheelchair becomes paramount and will have a huge bearing on your teams season and from an individual point of view your own development and progress to the elite level.

Sandy Blythe one of the greatest players to ever play the game and was the Captain of many teams that I coached put it in very simple terms you must strive to play above your points. This basically means you develop the ability to guard players defensively above your point's class. Sandy was a 2.5 that would often guard 4.0 and 4.5 players and was very effective in closing them down or restricting their ability by keeping them below their normal scoring average. Sandy would urge everyone around him to improve their chair skills and play above their points and with the example he set there was plenty of inspiration for his team mates.

SIMPLE WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR CHAIR SKILLS

Improving your chair skills can be done at training which is where the competitive interplay will certainly make great improvements but I would like to think players with elite mindsets would be constantly looking for ways to improve away from the training and playing court. The following will give you a few ideas and I am sure you can add to the list.

- 1) Weight Training will be your biggest asset as improvements in strength will make it far easier to handle the wheelchair and jump it as a tactic to break away from pressure. Strength work will give you that explosion to push away and around your opponents.
- 2) Set up a boxing speed ball and learn how to increase your hand speed in the process. Quick hands will transfer to a quick wheels and quick manoeuvres.
- 3) Get in your sports chair as much as possible, take it to shopping malls and centres and dodge the oncoming shoppers.
- 4) Any activity that will improve your reflex speed.

Time spent improving any aspect of your game or the teams' game is never wasted and chair skills is probably over looked by quite a few players and coaches as they search for the perfect offense or defence for their respective team.

INDIVIDUAL CHAIR SKILLS DRILLS

- 1) Reaction drills in a small area with and without the ball
- 2) Jumping, tilting, twists,
- 3) Full court – around the outside lines of the court working on various chair skills including stops, hard turns, backwards, twists, tilts, spins and players are only limited by their imaginations.

TEAM CHAIR SKILL DRILLS

- 1) Shark
- 2) Tag
- 3) Follow the leader – (reaction in a small area) and free flow
- 4) Charlie over the water
- 5) Line Drill – with a partner
- 6) Shadow Drill – with a partner
- 7) Jam and Spin – with a partner
- 8) Cones and Funnels – small court
- 9) Lakers block out drill
- 10) 2on2, 3on3 quarter court – no key penetration

BALL HANDLING

Players need to feel comfortable handling the basketball and must also learn to handle it at various angles and increase manual dexterity. My number one rule in any form of basketball is look after the ball and turnovers can kill your teams' performance or keep a weak or underrated opponent in a game. Ball handling along with chair skills plays such a role in implementing any system of play that a player needs to spend a great deal of their practice time away from normal trainings and games getting better.

Set homework for the players that has them not only practicing various skills, but set targets for them to track their progress. With every target reached a great deal confidence will be gained by the player and may even promote some friendly competition within the team to reach similar standards or set new ones. There are a large number of drills that will develop good ball handling and I will list some of my favourites along with others I have picked up over the years. I am constantly modifying, adjusting and thinking up creative drills that keep training interesting and fresh. One last aspect of handling the basketball is to be proficient equally on both sides of the body. I witnessed an Australian National team miss out on a chance to play off for a Paralympic Gold Medal due to a lack of skill on the opposite sides of their body. It was a tight ball game for 36 minutes and in the course of the next 3 minutes a golden opportunity was lost as the opposing team forced Australia on to their opposite hands to dribble and pass and several turnovers later the game was lost.

BALL HANDLING DRILLS

Pete Maravich Drills for manual dexterity

- 1) Squeeze the banana – develops forearm strength
- 2) Tap drill – Various Angles
- 3) Pendulum – 3 angles
- 4) Round the world - body
- 5) Spinning the ball on various fingers
- 6) Over and under hand roll
- 7) Up and over – back up and over can also be done with claps in between.
- 8) Quick draw – with a partner

General Drills

- 1) Ball slaps – a good warm up get the blood flowing through the hands and fingers
- 2) Traps and Bounce stops – performed at speed
- 3) Dribbling 1 and 2 ball drills various types of dribbles
- 4) Face off – grab opponents chair with one hand while dribbling with the other
- 5) Juggling 2 or more basketballs

With any drills I give the players to do I constantly look to challenge the players limits be it adding more basketball, increasing the speed of the drill or making player get in touch with their senses by having them do it blind.

PASSING

Passing is another skill I think that is really under taught in the hierarchy of player development. Getting the ball to the open shooter is so important for securing victory for your team. A good passing team also creates a far more united team as players within the group all get to touch the ball, and will make far better position knowing their team mates will be looking for them. Teams that don't pass well are prone to frustration as players get annoyed with each other and after a while a stop making good position as the ball seldom ever reaches them. Another overlooked fundamental of passing is the simple act of catching the ball. It amazes me at just how many times during a training session or game that the ball gets dropped and we should understand the reasons and try to correct and reduce the incidents.

Reasons for dropped catches

- 1) Poor passing
- 2) Lack of concentration
- 3) Not in a balanced position to receive the pass
- 4) Taking your eyes off the ball and not seeing the pass into the hands
- 5) Pass is thrown outside a players balance range especially the low pointers
- 6) Faking out the passer
- 7) Thinking about what you're going to do next and lose focus on catching the ball
- 8) Poor technique with the hands to catch the ball

The correct technique to catch a ball is very simple. Have the shooting hand slightly over and the offhand slightly under with the fingers relaxed and spread ready to receive, this way you're always ready to shoot the instant the catch is made without a lot of adjustment with the hands.

Some tips and advice for improving passing

- 1) "Look where you are passing", "pass where you are looking".
- 2) Make sure you are balanced when making the pass.
- 3) Be clever and deceptive, but never fancy.
- 4) Fake one type of pass to create the space to use another.
- 5) Keep in mind the range of balance when passing to team mates.
- 6) Pass the ball away from the defensive side of your team mate.
- 7) Make the next pass the safest. This is of the utmost IMPORTANCE!!!
- 8) Pass your team mate into the ball and don't have reaching to far forward or behind.
- 9) When lobbing the ball to the high point player, put it on top off his head as this will make it hard for the defence to knock it away without fouling.
- 10) See the player your passing to as the game is always flowing.
- 11) Learn to pass with either hand.
- 12) Any doubt on the pass then forget it choose another option.

Some points on receiving the pass

- 1) See the basketball into your hands.
- 2) Get eye contact with the passer
- 3) Show a target hand when you're ready to receive, this will stop you faking out the passer
- 4) Keep coming to the ball when leading, it is important that coaches drill this.
- 5) On receiving the pass, always turn and face the basket regardless of where you are on the court.
- 6) One play phase at a time, catch the ball first everything else is unfolds after this.

Passing Drills

- 1) 2 man drill – working on good technique and various passes.
- 2) Good pass, bad pass
- 3) 3 and 5 man weave – working on getting ahead of the ball to receive
- 4) 3 man, 3 line passing 2 balls.
- 5) Line passing drill – various passes whole squad

- 6) 3 man keep away – working on passing under pressure
- 7) Pass tag – fun strategy game involving whole squad
- 8) Caterpillar – 1, 2 ball as well as competitive
- 9) 4 corners – the thinking person's passing drill 2-4 balls
- 10) Circle passing
- 11) Inside out circle passing
- 12) Rapid fire – quick change
- 13) Keepings off – reduced court space
- 14) Touchdown – moving the ball from one end of the court to the other with no dribble

SHOOTING

Shooting without question is one of the most enjoyable parts of the game of any form of basketball. Nothing beats the natural high of consistently putting the ball through the hoop. To some players it's almost like a drug and all the great shooters spend hours on the court honing their rhythm and their technique in a never ending quest to feel that high and increase their shooting percentages. Now I can never overstate the importance of shooting to your team and also the enjoyment factor of playing the game, as poor performances on the score board are confidence sapping and quite demoralising. With all this in mind time must be spent on this unique art form as the old adage rings true if you can't score, you can't win. Unfortunately not every player on your team will become a good shooter, especially from the perimeter. Even on the greatest teams now playing the game, every player on the team is not a great outside shooter and most sides have only 2 to 3 genuine outside scoring threats.

There are several factors for poor shooting that dictate this, along with a few suggestions and cures.

- 1) Poor shooting technique would be the number one reason. Great shooters have excellent mechanics and an almost effortless release.
- 2) Lack of coordination. If the muscles of the body are fighting each other for control the chances of becoming any type of reasonable shooter are remote.
- 3) Lack of accuracy or depth perception. You need to 2 eyes working together to be a great shooter. One eye gives you accuracy while the other gives you depth perception or the ability to judge the distance to the basket. A player that is missing either eye in their shot will struggle and most perimeter shots could be viewed as lucky shots, not so much good shots.
- 4) Lack of practice. Your players must understand that it takes time to develop a shooting base. I heard a College coach from the USA state "the secret to becoming a great shooter is get a good technique and then shoot 250,000 shots". Now note he said becoming, this is just the start of creating the shooting base necessary to become really good at it.
- 5) Lack of conditioning. Some players shoot quite well when fresh and can often knock down an incredible amount of made shots in a row while shooting around. Suddenly you get in a game or training situation and fatigue sets in, lack of conditioning makes it very hard to concentrate and control most aspects of the game especially shooting.
- 6) Mental distractions can play a big factor in poor shooting. These can come from personal problems away from basketball, along with on court distractions of crowd noise and opposition players talking it up or playing very physical. Team mates getting down on each other and even the frustrated coach can add to the problem.

- 7) **Lack of a specific target.** Quite a few players when asked what do you sight, when you're shooting will give a vague answer without being very specific. Most of the time it is I look at the ring or various parts of it. If the truth be known they throw it up towards the basket and hope and pray that it drops through. I will cover specific targets in the section on shooting technique.
- 8) **Poor Balance.** Quite a lot of shots are missed purely by players not being balanced and putting their chair in the optimum position for a perimeter shot.
- 9) **Rushing the shot.** Some players get a little too excited at times and that rush of blood results in a quick shot out of their normal shooting tempo. Another reason for rushing shots is the fear of having it blocked. So many players hate being embarrassed by have their shot block, but to me both as a player and a coach that if you don't lose possession, it doesn't really count as you still have the ball. The only time I count a block where the opposition still has the ball is a last second block that wins the game for you. When you look at statistics in games there are really very few blocks so players need to relax and not worry so much about being blocked. Of course you don't take the ball up the biggest opposition player then try and shoot over them which invites a block, unless you're looking to get them in foul trouble or fouled out. In that situation you are taking a risk to get a reward.
- 10) **Make sure you are well hydrated.** Dehydration can give you that washed out tired look and will have a marked effect on your performance as energy levels will stay low.
- 11) **Poor self-talk.** This can really hurt a players' confidence if they are of the belief they are poor or worst still hopeless at any aspect of basketball. As I stated before a player needs to develop a shooting base and may have all the right physical tools to reach this objective, but a poor mindset and a lack of confidence will destroy any chance of them reaching their full potential.
- 12) **Poor shot discipline.** Shoot good shots is number 2 in my 3 most important rules of basketball. Poor quality shots can put your team completely out of the contest very early in any game if players are not disciplined in their shot selection. You have to make players aware and accountable for their actions on court and looking back on a previous section on coaching this point really stands out. If it's not important to you as coach it will not be important to your players.

So what really constitutes a good shot?

- 1) **Shooting balanced shots** which includes pulling out of lay ups if good balance is not there. I admire players who understand the balance requirements for lay ups and give up this shot to retain possession for their team. The Gold Medal team in Atlanta understood shot discipline and I am proud to say we made great decisions in this vital area.
- 2) **Shoot within your range.** Taking shots outside of your range results in strain and the ball will struggle to get to the hoop or the shot will be all over the place, making it hard for the rebounders.
- 3) **Make sure you have rebounders on perimeter (all shots ideally) shots,** as one shot offenses will not win your team many games.
- 4) **Know your limitations in regards to shooting.** In elite teams there are those that can shoot and those that under most circumstances should look to those that can shoot. Shooting is not an equal opportunity activity and players must know their roles in regards to this. In junior and club teams everyone should shoot and work at improving their ability in this vital skill, as these players may have a real talent for shooting if time is spent on developing it.

SHOOTING TECHNIQUE

A great deal has been written on shooting the basketball and there are many theories on what constitutes good technique and even secret techniques that will turn everyone in to a great shooter. I prefer to take a more common sense approach to learning the fine art of scoring baskets. I am a great believer in keeping things as simple as possible and when teaching shooting this does not change. An easy way to teach most skills is relating them to key words. A popular word for shooting is B.E.E.F and each letter makes a player think about the basic components of what makes up the shot.

B – Balance

Balance is an important fundamental in everything we do in regards to playing basketball and with shooting it will vary from player to player. Coaches like a player to square up to the basket and if your shooting purely off the shoulder then being perfectly square to the basket makes a great deal of sense. However squaring up to the basket to me means angling your body slightly to the left for a right hand shooter and slightly to the right for a left hand shooter. My rule is the square up must suit the natural balance of the shooter and I once witnessed a great outside shooter who played for Mexico who would roll sideways towards the sideline to shoot from the foul line area. It really doesn't matter so long as your arm has the freedom to make a direct line to the basket without your body fighting itself and cramping the shot. The fingers should be spread comfortably on the ball with the ideal starting position is to have the fore finger and middle finger either side of the valve and the thumbs forming a T or L shape. Starting the ball under the chin approximately level with the chest and don't be too concerned if the palms are touch the ball in this position as they will release away from the ball when it is brought up to the release position.



E – Eyes

The eyes are so important in shooting for a variety of reasons not the least being is to find the target. Now some coaches like a player to aim at the back of the ring and shoot slightly short, while other say look at the front of the ring and shoot slightly longer. Now I personally don't like either of these methods far preferring to focus on a far more specific target, the W that holds the net to the ring. Now if the ball strikes this target it will be inside the ring, it cannot be anywhere else. There are 12 W's holding up the net so get the players to focus on this target and watch your teams shooting percentages steadily rise. Now if the W is not centred at the rear of the ring then sight the back 2 W's, and shoot between them.

In the previous section on shooting under factors for missing shots and cures I stressed the importance of being a two eyed shooter. This is not a small point as one eye gives you accuracy (that is why you always see pistol shooters close one eye as all their looking for is accuracy) and the other eye gives you depth perception (in simple terms this means judging the distance to the basket). You need both eyes working in tandem to give yourself the best chance of making a hoop and blocking your sight on your shooting action will give you a poor result. The opposite side to this is as a defensive player if you can get your hand in the sight line of the shooter 30% more shots will be missed above the normal averages of the player taking the shot. This simple statistic alone stresses the need to be a TWO EYED SHOOTER and getting your shot off before the defence can challenge it.

E – Elbow

Where the elbow goes the hand is sure to follow. This is a little saying used by quite a large number of shooting coaches and shows the important role it plays in the shot at the point of release. The elbow needs to be directly under the ball and pointed to the target as the hand releases it.

F – Follow Through

The follow through is the final act of shooting the basketball, and is also known as the goose neck, the J and I am sure a few other names. The follow through plays an important role to the end of shot as it puts vital back spin on the ball on its flight to the basket. The spin lifts and softens the ball in the air and if the ball has a medium arc it gives your rebounders a better chance to read the ball and a little more time to better position themselves to get second shots.

I use 3 key words when working with players on shooting technique. I call it the ROLL – UP – SNAP method of shooting and the following points help explain shooting in simple terms.

- 1) I believe that the majority of good shooters have a slight roll on the ball and this gives momentum to the shot and promotes a smooth fluid one shot action. Some players bring the ball up to a point and then they stop, a new phase of movement begins and this kills the original momentum and makes it difficult to shoot longer range shots without straining to get the ball to the basket.
- 2) To put up and arch on the shot you need to brace down in the chair and then lift up to shoot the ball. Low pointers should lean back into the back rest and mid points can use a combination of leaning back and dipping down slightly utilising the stomach muscles to help with the up lift. High point players can brace down through there leg muscles and footplate and then utilise their core in driving the up lift in their shot. Combing the brace down and lift with the rolling action and shooting the ball up to basket with a medium arc should give you a nice rhythm and a soft release.
- 3) At the point of the snap (follow through) the shooting hand should be parallel to the floor and there should be a wrinkle forming on the inside of the wrist. This wrist flexibility is important in shooting as it will give you far more control over the shot and with that should come consistency.

Final Thoughts on Shooting - Keep the action as simple, fluid and smooth as possible. Find your own unique natural shooting rhythm; this is a speed at which you have full control without strain and struggle. The ring is a flat target and you need a decent arc on the ball to show it to the target for a better chance to score. Stay focussed, concentrate as your learning to shoot then you will find that once you eliminate too much thought you will hit that mystical experience called the Zone. The Zone is a place where there really is no thought given to the shot and it just seems like everything you put up is going in and nobody can stop you. Having visited the Zone several times myself both on my feet and playing in a wheelchair, it really is an amazing feeling that puts a whole new perspective on playing the game. The experience of playing in the Zone will leave you with fantastic memories and if you are a current player you will want to visit the Zone as often as possible. This is not an easy task and if you try and force it, you will have very little chance of ever reaching it. Work hard in honing your technique and practice your shooting as much as you possible can and the Zone will become a wonderful part of your playing experience.

SHOOTING DRILLS INDIVIDUAL

When structuring shooting drills you need to look at 3 aspects of the game that being

- 1) The short range game – shots within 2 meters from the basket

Lay ups (both hands) – overhand, underhand, reverse, hook, power moves

Post Moves, stationary and rolling short range bank and touch shots

- 2) The mid-range game – shots outside 2 meters to foul line distance from the basket

Foul Shots, 7 spot shooting stationary and rolling

- 3) The long range game – shots outside the foul line to the 3 point line

7 spot shooting for those athletes with this range

SHORT RANGE GAME

When practising layups make sure as much as possible you get on a good angle to complete the shot, this is especially true for low point players with limited balance. High point players with their superior balance should be able to make close to the basket shots on any angle. An important technique for shooting shots in the short range game is to aim high on the backboard and shoot soft shots. The High/Soft method should be a strong part of every player's game and constantly emphasised in practice. It is very hard to make touch shots close to the basket when under pressure and you must impress this point on all players as layups and foul shots are 2 things that will hurt your team in close games. Players should try and get up as many shots as possible in the shortest possible time. A butterfly pattern works well here and you add bounce stops and many types of fakes. High point players should spend a good deal of their practice working off the block (low post area) as inbound plays will focus on getting the ball to them in this area.

To combine rebounding and shooting nothing beats the Superman drill and it adds an element of hustle to the drill. The player throws the ball off the backboard from the block and must hustle across control the rebound then turn and shoot.

SHOOTING DRILLS TEAM

Layup Drills

These so many drills you can use for team layup practice and the following are some of my favourites. You should where possible make them far more competitive by running 2 teams at either end against each other, with the losing team doing a penalty.

- 1) 5 angles (a set number in a row with a time limit)
- 2) Tennessee Half/Full court – time limit or target made drill
- 3) 2 line pass exchange
- 4) Triangle Layups (easy to build into a multi skill drill)
- 5) Cincinnati – again another great multi skill drill
- 6) Close range knockout – A brilliant pressure shooting drill
- 7) Full court 2 and 1 first to 21points
- 8) Partner shooting – Block to Block / Contested close to the basket off various cuts

MID RANGE GAME

Before any player can develop a great long range game they must be competent mid range shooter. My old coach told me “an elite player that can’t hit 60% of their uncontested shots has no business attempting the same shots in games”. Now that is for elite shooters and developing players must be given the freedom to develop their shooting over time as to give themselves the opportunity to get to national and then international level.

INDIVIDUAL SHOOTING DRILLS

7 spots shooting is a very important here along with heaps of repetition and getting comfortable at a foul shot distance from the basket. Spot shooting will give a player the competitive edge over opponents in that they will be practising all over the place and you will be looking to take shots from the 7 spots during a game and working diligently to make sure you either receive the ball on these spots or create the shot off the dribble and by utilising screens.

- 1) 21 up Timed – Make 3 shots from each spot 1) Baseline – left/right sides, 2) 45 Degrees – left/right sides, Elbows (edge of the foul line) – left /right side and the Foul Line. 21 and 15 – In this drill you make 21 shots before 15 missed shots and again you work from your 7 spots. Initially players or coaches can mark the 7 spots with tape or cones until player are used to the distance.
- 2) 5-10-20 Minute Drill – Simple timed drill where you make as many shots possible from the 7 spots in an allotted time. Keep trying to break your own record and coaches can have a team or club record that a player has set to make it something players can strive to beat. Some players thrive on this and yet my best advice to all players is keep becoming a better you and work on setting your own personal best every time you’re on the court.
- 3) The Foul Line Rhythm Drill – A great drill that will improve your free throw and spot shooting These shots are a mix of stationary, off the dribble, self passing by back spinning the ball and various fakes and spin moves. I call this the King of the mid range shooting drills.
- 4) Beat the Pro – In this drill you work the 7 spots against an imaginary pro player. Every time you make a shot you get +2 and when you miss it’s -1 and you have a target to reach of 11 or 21 points. To make this drill harder give yourself +1 for a make and -2 for a miss.
- 5) 21 and 15 – A great pressure drill where you make 3 each from the 7 spots before you miss 15 shots. To make this more challenging, reduce the missed shots to a lesser target if 15 misses is far too easy.

TEAM SHOOTING DRILLS

All the drills in the short range series except we shoot from any or all of our 7 spots and again I would ask coaches to put an element of competition with penalties for losing teams.

- 1) Competitive Foul Shooting Team versus Team – Teams compete against each other at both ends of the court until one team hits a certain number of foul shots in a row this could be 7, 8, 9 or 10. On reaching the designated target the winning team keeps shooting while the opposite team runs a suicide and all players must get back before the winning team reaches the same target if they fail to do this they must run it again and the winning team must get an extra basket or two on top of the original target. Teams then change ends and the contest begins again.

- 2) Yes / No – A fun free throw game that can be used as a warm down at the end of training or in the middle of a hard session to give the players a light hearted mental break. The drill begins with all players starting on the baseline and the coach chooses a player from the squad to shoot a single foul shot. The baseline is then divided into the left and right side of the backboard with players on the right facing the shooting betting they will make the shot and players on the left taking the opposite view that they will miss. Now the players in the No group may yell and try to distract the shooter which usually leads to a great deal of good natured jokes and funny high pitched sounds or grunts. If the player makes the shot the No group runs a full court sprint, while the Yes group stays put and this is reversed if the shot is missed.
- 3) Coaches should design shooting drills where the team is going to get their shot from the offenses they are running working the 7 spots into the drills. This is also the guide when a player hits the spot and they're open for rebounders to look for angles to gain an advantage.

There are literally thousands of shooting drills and it is important to have a group of core drills and then throw in some change up drills to keep training fresh over the course of the season.

LONG RANGE GAME

For most players' even High pointers the 3 point shot is quite hard and even harder now FIBA has moved the line out further. Most 3 point shots in games are taken from one wing around the top of the perimeter to the other wing as this area allows a player to get a roll into the shot providing momentum. It is handy to have a few players in the team that have some degree of accuracy from long range as you may need to fire one up at the end of a game to tie it up or go for the win. Another advantage is that the 3 is equivalent to the dunk in able bodied basketball in that it can be a huge energy booster for the whole team. You can also use it at the end of a quarter as a set play to take some positive energy into the next quarter and players can get to celebrate as a group.

Now the 3 point shot takes a great deal of hard work and dedication and should only be taken by players who are not straining to get the ball there. Younger players should be aware that continual practice of straining to shoot this shot will produce poor shooting technique for their mid and close range attempts. A good strength program is an a great asset to a player who wants to be a good 3 point shooter, and the strength gain on such a program will result in greater control over the mechanics of shooting long range. I feel it is important for players to develop a shooters roll when shooting the 3 point shot and finding the right roll of the chair in conjunction with the shot will help increase your shooting percentages.

Now the sheer distance of the shot means a high level of accuracy is needed as even a few degrees to the left or right will result in a poor attempt. Team mates need to understand that the ball will come off the ring far longer than normal which will usually result in more of a chance to get the offensive rebound. Reading the flight of the ball is a practiced skill and one every player should work diligently on. Work on all phases of shooting at training and stress the need for players to read the rebounds of the various shots. I always stress to players not to trust their team mates (think of them as the worst shooter on the planet) when shooting the ball only trust in their own shot. This serves 2 purposes in that you have confidence in yourself and develop a rebounding mentality in regard to everyone you play with.

MULTI SKILLING

After getting past teaching the basic skills in a simple break down form, it is time to fast track the training of the athletes you're working with. I multi skill as much as possible and am always looking to introduce as many possible combinations of chair skills, ball handling, passing and shooting as you can into the drills you run. This will really ramp up the session and coaches be ready to work even harder as there will be far more feedback you need to give the players. Players need feedback and correction to improve and it is important to make them realise that this is not a personal criticism of them as a person. Always critique the act, never the person and this will help form a good working relationship between you and your team.

STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING

The backbone of any good basketball player, team and club will be a solid strength and conditioning program. Every player must take responsibility to get in the best possible physical shape and then taper off to be primed for competition at various times of the year. It is important that you combine a number of activities and cross train for the best possible results. I want every player on my team ready to play 40 minutes of hard, competitive relentless basketball with smart decision making and this cannot possibly happen if an athlete is not in great physical condition.

Here are the foundations behind a great strength and conditioning program.

- 1) **Strength** – This can be gained via the weight room and a good quality program that is specifically designed for a players point class and maximising all available muscle groups. Medicine ball work is a great way to develop dynamic and explosive power needed in chair skills. The medicine ball works like A plyometric for your arms and this is a great cross trainer to compliment your weight workouts. To play above your point's weight training will be the catalyst to help improve every aspect of your game. Only 2 sessions a week will have a dramatic effect on your overall strength and once it becomes a habit you will be annoyed and disappointed when you miss a workout.
- 2) **Stretching and injury prevention** – Improving flexibility and keeping muscles loose and ready is a great asset for every player to develop. Preventing injury through smart training especially in the use of bands and light weight routines to strengthen rotator cuffs can keep you on the court and pain free and ready to play at your best.
- 3) **Cardio work** – Building lung capacity and muscular endurance will and lowering resting heart rate must be high on the goal list of all players. Cardio work can involve just pushing your chair either slow long distance or short, sharp speed work to speed ball work and hand grinding on a winch.

RECOVERY

A player's body will break down if they don't follow a smart recovery protocols after every training session and game. Warming up and cooling down if ignored will leave the athlete injured and frustrated at not being able to compete. Be proactive with your recovery the following points will help

- 1) **Warm-down:** Ensure you complete a 5-10 minute warm-down immediately after training and competition.
- 2) **Stretching:** Following the warm-down complete at least 5 minutes of stretching.
- 3) **Nutrition:** Make use of products within your nutrition recovery bar to start rehydrating, refuelling and rebuilding. See a sports nutritionist for advice as they are up with all recent break throughs to help you achieve the best results.

POST RECOVERY

- 1) **Reducing Core Temperature:** The Australian Paralympic Team have several ice baths that athletes immerse themselves in after hard training and competition. This made sure that athletes were in better condition than their competitors as the competition headed into finals. This method should be the standard for every country competing at the Games. Now having your own ice bath is the ultimate for any serious athlete but not really practical so let's explore simple things all athletes can do to as an alternative.
 - 1) **Ice Towels** – a simple and effective way to cool down the body draping towels that have been immersed in ice water.
 - 2) **Cold Drinks** – Ice cold drinks will cool the body from the inside.
 - 3) **Cold Showers** – If ice is not available a cold bath or shower is still a valuable recovery aid.

COLD WATER IMMERSION is an effective recovery strategy to:

- Reduce heart rate and cardiac output
- Redirect blood from the periphery to the core
- Enhance blood flow and circulation
- Reduce inflammation and swelling
- Decrease perceptions of pain
- Decrease thermal strain
- Decrease body temperature
- Enhance recovery from muscle damage and fatigue

PLEASE TAKE NOTE

- Depending on the method you used, core body temperature can continue to drop for approximately 30 minutes very slowly and with no harmful effects. **DO NOT** have a long hot shower after ice and cool down therapies as this will reverse the effect, put some warm clothes on instead.
- 2) **RECOVERY NUTRITION:** make sure you have a recovery nutrition plan in place to ensure you are well hydrated and your nutritional needs are met post training and games.
 - 3) **MASSAGE:** If available utilise the services of a good masseuse as there are many benefits' here.
 - 4) **COMPRESSION CLOTHING:** A great breakthrough in helping the body recover from rigors of hard training and competition.

WHAT IS IT?

Compression garments work by applying external pressure to the limb, the pressure exerted is greatest at the forearm, gradually decreasing up the arm. This is called graduated compression.

WHAT IT DOES IT DO FOR YOU?

- Increase blood flow and improve circulation
- Reduce swelling
- Reduce muscle soreness
- Reduce feelings of fatigue, heavy arms

Make sure the garment is tight as loose fitting compression tops are nowhere near as effective.

WHEN TO WEAR THEM?

Where possible, compression garments should be worn after showering at the end of training or games and the longer you are able to wear them the better. Sleeping overnight in the garments is okay and they can also be beneficial to wear them in between training sessions.

HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR COMPRESSION GARMENTS

- Place all compression garments in a laundry bag or hand wash
- Do not use hot water
- Do not use fabric softener
- Never put compression garments in the dryer
- Take care putting the garments on – work them up the arms rather than pulling from the top!

ARE ALL COMPRESSION GARMENTS THE SAME?

Like most things in life you get what you pay for and compression gear is no different. Make sure you purchase a good quality compression top as cheap garments will not have the same effect and will not last too long. The Australian Institute of Sport uses and recommends 2XU compression garments and having used them myself they are excellent. Remember for recovery it is better to have them tight rather than just fitting or slightly loose.

SLEEP

- 1) Sleep is the best recovery strategy we have – physically and mentally!
- 2) Sleep is habitual and becomes routine.
- 3) Caffeine, alcohol and hypo-hydration can have a negative influence on sleep.

What can you do to enhance sleep?

- 1) Warm The skin or cool the core
 - Shower before bed
 - Ideally using a contrast of hot and cold showers
 - Use any form of hydrotherapy / cold water immersion available
- 2) Encourage motor relaxation by stretching 5-10 minutes prior to bed
- 3) Sensory withdrawal – Do what you can to make it dark (use eye shades), quiet (use ear plugs) and comfortable
- 4) Use various breathing and relaxation techniques
- 5) If you are feeling excited, nervous, anxious or having trouble sleeping, write down a list of things you need to do the next day or anything that comes to mind (write and then forget!!)
- 6) Find what relaxes you (listen to music or try reading for 10-20 minutes before going to bed)
- 7) Sleep is a routine – try to go to bed and get up at similar times each day

Don't panic if you have a bad night's sleep leading up to competition as prior sleep history (weeks and months) is far more important than the night before an event. It is similar to a marathon runner having a pre competition meal as it is far more important what was consumed in the days and weeks leading up to the event.

OFFENSE

Basketball really is just a big game of keepings off until somebody decides to shoot the ball. Offense is all about creating space and opportunities to score and defence is all about taking away space and limiting opportunities. With this in mind I keep my offensive system as simple as possible and drill players until they not only understand the system and concepts, but it becomes a part of their natural game without over thinking and confusing themselves. I think players perform better in a system that is simple but also gives them the freedom to make decisions and be creative. Now some coaches prefer their team to come down the floor and just purely react to the defence and then create on the move and pray that their team mates come along for the ride. I personally prefer to position players to attack the defence and look to create endless mismatches, decent positions to score and rebound. Now the game can become a big fluid chess match as coaches move players into position to gain an advantage with the defence trying to disrupt the flow and force errors and poor shots. You must look at your teams' strengths in regards to offense and adjust your system to utilise the strengths of the players and camouflage the weakness.

A major part of my philosophy especially with wheelchair basketball has always been to play an aggressive, relentless transition (also known as fast break basketball) game forcing the opponent to chase and foul. Now to play this exciting style of game requires several important attributes.

- 1) Well-conditioned athletes – There is very little chance of playing a great transition game if the players are not in the very best physical condition. Hard word in the gym and on the court and an understanding that you may be needed to play the entire game if called upon, meant players playing for any team I coach you must be in the best possible shape.
- 2) Understanding the rules – I have simple rules on transition and the most effective way to play it. Now these rules were developed over several years of trial and error and in my observations of games. Now I seldom watch any game as a fan or casual observer and will look for another play I can use or improve existing ones. Coach Walkers rules for transition
 - Mid/High Pointers carry the ball – This is a very strict rule that helps reduce turnovers as there will be quite a deal of contact when you ramp up the transition game and the better balanced players are able to cope with this and keep the play under far more control. The key is to have the ball carrier attack the foul line.
 - Mid/High Pointers fill the lanes – With a mid-pointer carrying the ball, I expect the other high and mid-pointers to get out ahead of the ball and fill the left and right lanes and attack the basket or draw defensive players out to create space. With the ball attacking the foul line I want both left and right side available for scoring passes. Players must also be conscious of making position to rebound and transition basketball makes it hard to be block out.
 - Low-pointers to the outlets – On a defensive rebound I want low point players to clear out towards the sideline and receive outlet passes. This allows the mids and highs to take off and make position to receive the ball back while thrusting forward down the court. This is far preferable than one player trying to negotiate defensive traffic while at the same time handle the ball in a crowd.

- **Low-pointers back pick defence** – I need the low pointers to cause as much interference to the opposition as is humanly possible by back picking. Now all players should back pick when possible, yet in a transition game I want my best scoring threats down the floor while our low pointers cut or slow high-point defenders so we create not only a numbers advantage, but one of points as well.
- **High and Mid-pointers must be pushing hard on every transition play** – most players will not push hard if they feel they will not get the shot. This attitude will be the death of your transition offense as it has to be something every player accepts to make it a success. After a while all players will understand that they can create easy opportunities for team mate by merely pushing hard down the floor and may never even touching the ball.

I include transition in every training session I conduct as it is important part of my philosophy and as I stated in the coaching section, if it's important to the coach it will become important to the players. This style of basketball is hard work and requires drilling your team until it becomes your primary weapon on offense. Everything else I do offensively is secondary to transition. You see it really doesn't matter what the defence are playing as we won't let you set it up as the defence will be scrambling and chasing us.

Drills for Transition – Above rules apply

- 1) **Box Focus** – Teaches focused and peripheral vision
- 2) **4 phase shooting** – 3 on 0 teaching shot options for transition
- 3) **3 man weave** – ball drop at centre line 2 on 1 to the basket
- 4) **5 man weave** – ball drop at centre line 3 on 2 to the basket
- 5) **5 man weave** – 3 on 2 back – 2 on 1 back
- 6) **7 man weave** – 4 on 3 back
- 7) **9 man weave** – 5 on 4 back
- 8) **2 on 1, 3 on 2 and 4 on 3 continuous**
- 9) **2 on 1, 3 on 2 and 4 on 3 with a trailing defence**
- 10) **3, 4 and 5 line baseline touch and trail**
- 11) **Team 3 on 2 and 4 on 3**
- 12) **Quick change Scrimmage** – Ball changes possession on a random whistle

There are obviously more drills I could have listed but I tend to use these far more than any other and it really doesn't matter what you run it is what you emphasise and it doesn't change here. Make players follow the transition rules and gradually build the speed of the drill and drill players to have a sense of urgency. We want everyone to **SPEED UP** and **CALM DOWN** to make great decisions.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Transition is an exciting way to play the game and once your players get used to the hard training and start getting results in games they will fall in love and have a great deal of fun with it. With the Gold Medal winning team in Atlanta we had the attitude if you can't roll with us you can't play with us. It was an attitude that really was hard to play against and caused a great deal of frustration to our opponents as they had very few answers for it. Even 15 points down after 5 minutes in the Gold Medal game didn't curve the player's natural aggressive push at all costs, relentless attitude to playing this way. By half time in that game we were 1 point down and Great Britain were puzzled as to how they were going to stop us and in foul trouble. I witnessed 25 minutes of the best transition basketball ever and even though Troy Sachs scored a record haul of points at the Paralympics for a single game, it was the transition game of the entire team which secured the victory.

I once had a young player come up to me and apologise for what he thought was a very poor game in the final of our National Championships, the year before the Paralympics. Brooke was a sensational transition player and up to the final was averaging over 20 points a game. In the final the scores were tied up at the half, and the game was played at a very furious pace, as both teams gave it everything looking for an advantage. Our transition was okay in the first half, but it really kicked into high gear in the second half and we went on to a 20 point victory. Brooke had only scored 4 points in the final and was feeling a little down. I looked at him in total disbelief because even though he didn't get many opportunities to score in this particular game he virtually set the easy victory up by the way he played. He was down the court like lightning and in the process was dragging players away from the key as they worried about him scoring his usual bag of points. I pointed this fact out to him that the sacrifices he made in that game was the reason we had won the game, as the opposition was so worried about him they needed 2 and even 3 players to stop him. He didn't understand the contribution he had made to the team at the time but was never worried about scoring so much after this as he realised that it really doesn't matter who scores so long as the team wins. And so it is with any team, you can do amazing things so as nobody cares who gets the credit for it. This is a true team attitude where everyone plays their particular role and at the end of the game we have a positive result.

HALF COURT OFFENSE

It really is a chess match when you're playing 5 on 5 in the half court and looking to get good shots with some opportunities to rebound. This is also where a players chair skills, ball handling, screening, passing, leading, cutting, shooting, rebounding and their ability to think all while being defended and constant movement occurs all around them comes to the fore. Again I would stress keep it simple coach and make sure players understand a few simple concepts and team fundamentals before you even get into play sets.

Many players need to understand that it is hard to win a game without the assistance of team mates. The game of wheelchair basketball is far more team orientated than the stand-up running game will ever be. The sheer size of the chair and the lack of lateral movement make it difficult to play a pure 1 on 1 style of game and this means it will often break down into 2 and even 3 man games to create good scoring options. Screening and sealing play a significant role in helping a team score and then there is still the act shooting the ball into the basket which some players struggle with. Now the shooting the ball

into the basket part is something I covered in an early chapter so I will only worry about creating good opportunities to shoot here. I like the players to be proactive both on offense and defence and try and keep a balanced approach to both. A habit player's form is watching the ball too much, and not looking at ways to break down their defensive opponent. We must exploit lazy players and gaps that open up, along with mismatches at every opportunity and be patient if a good shot doesn't present itself on the first play phase. Every player on receiving the ball must look towards the basket as doing this will always give the player options for the next pass, drive or shot depending on distance to the hoop. Here are 7 things a player can do once they pass the ball:

- 1) Cut to the basket
- 2) Screen away
- 3) Screen the ball
- 4) Go behind the ball for a hand off
- 5) Make an inside cut
- 6) Go away then replace myself
- 7) Stay there on the same spot

With these points in mind number 7 is one that player's do quite well if the coach allows such non-productive play. Your team will face different types of Zones, Man to Man and Pressing full court defences and it is important to have a checklist by which you prepare for these situations.

OFFENSIVE CHECKLIST

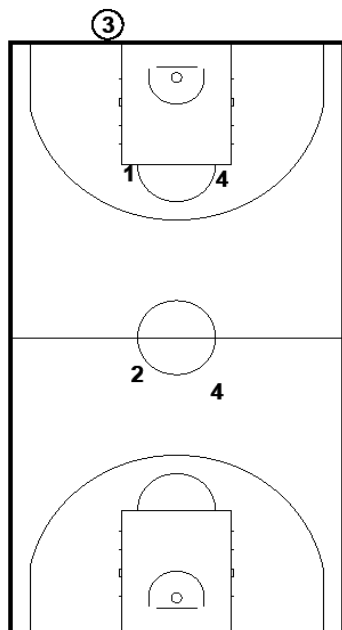
- 1) Press Break Offense – I start with this offense as the game can be lost in a very short period of time if your team is pressed and playing catch up hard for even the very best teams.
- 2) Zone Offense – Here I teach concepts rather than set plays as I want to exploit the weaknesses in the Zones alignment.
- 3) Man to Man – here I like using play sets as I can create far more mismatches. I use various play set against tight and aggressive defences.
- 4) Out of Bounds Plays – I concentrate on baseline plays here as the ball is only a few meters from the basket. There are 3 play sets I like but you may invent one that works well for your team.
- 5) Special Plays and Situations – Here you look at last second plays that arise each quarter and to create shots that can tie or win the game. There are various situations that arise towards the end of a game as well and you must be prepared for them.

PRESS BREAK OFFENSE

I have made this the first play set I teach when it comes to structure as it really doesn't matter about playing half-court offense if you are having a hard time just getting the ball down the court. I have seen it so many times especially in international competition, the game is pretty much over in the first quarter or even the first few minutes, as one team totally dominates their opposition with a full court press. You must prepare all your players for this pressure situations and a good way to do this is with disadvantage drills. An easy way to do this is to take several of the transition drills and reverse them to an advantage for the defensive team and demand the defence exert as much pressure as possible. An example here is 5, 7 and 9 man weave with a 2 on 3, 3 on 4 and 4 on 5 finishes. You can make it even harder by adding more defenders and penalising the defence if the offense scores.

1

Wheelchair Press Break
Press Break



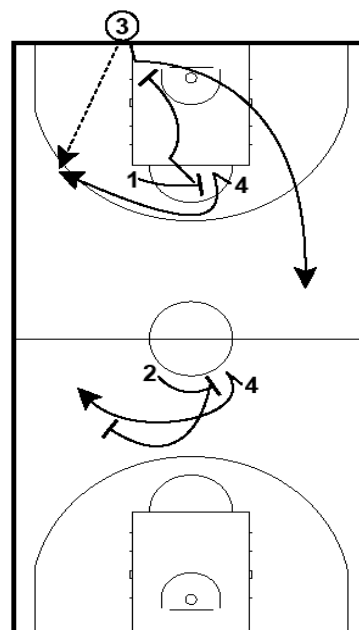
Wheelchair - pg. 10

PLAYER KEYS

- 1 – Low-pointer
- 2 – Low to Mid-pointer
- 3 – Mid-pointer
- 4 – High-pointer

2

Wheelchair Press Break
Press Break



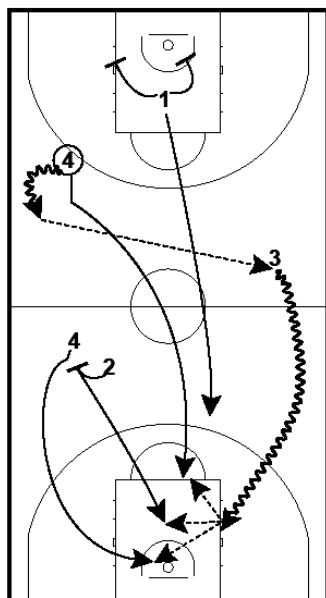
Wheelchair - pg. 11

Here is our initial set up with a mid-pointer taking the ball out of bounds and a high / low combination setting up near the foul line and just over the centre line.

The 2 lows set cross screens for the highs; they then cut towards the right side line facing the basket. The mid feeds the high and then receives a screen from the low freeing them to run the left lane.

3

Wheelchair Press Break
Press Break

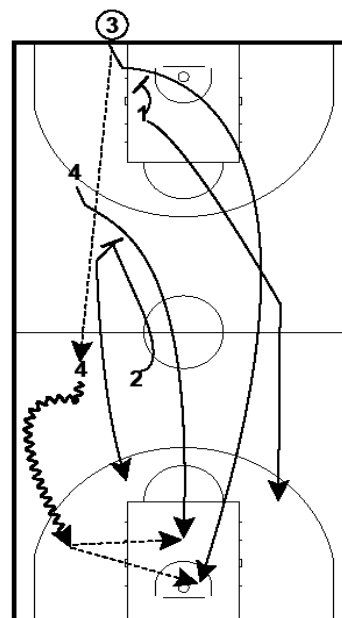


Wheelchair - pg. 12

The high with the ball turns and faces the basket they may even drive a little, and then passes to 3 who drives hard to the key. The mid can shoot or look to pass to either high filling the lane or trailing. The low pointers here back pick and then trail down.

4

Wheelchair Press Break
Press Break



Wheelchair - pg. 13

A variation here is to pass long to the high over the centre line who then drives to the key. The 2 lows set screens for the mid and the high and then back pick and trail. Players must push hard and cause as much back court interference as possible.

ZONE OFFENSE

They may start in a Zone but at some point most of the defence will have to match up on you.

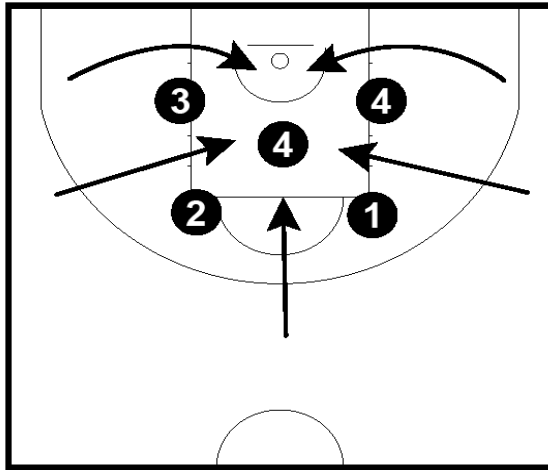
Here are some key points and concepts for playing against Zones

- 1) If their Zone fails to match up, have your High-pointers attack the gaps to create prime scoring and good rebounding positions.**
- 2) Look for a point's advantage on one side of the key every time you meet a Zone. This will cause immediate problems for the defence as they scramble to cover this tactic.**
- 3) Have your High and Mid-pointers split the defence with dribble penetration looking to draw 2 defenders and opening up gaps for team mates to exploit. I would not want the Low-pointers to put this sort of pressure on themselves as the balance factor could work against them, and we must always adhere to rule one of my Basketball Rules which is LOOK AFTER THE BALL.**
- 4) It is important to work the seams and gaps in the Zone along with trying to distort it as much as possible. This can be done by;**
 - Drawing players out**
 - Screening and back picking**
 - Sealing high and low**
 - Leading and cutting hard**
 - Creating mismatches.**
- 5) Watch the defence as well as the ball.**
- 6) Move the ball with a purpose and educate players as to why we do things.**
- 7) Use pass fakes as much as possible as Zones will react to the ball more so than the man at times and the threat of a pass going to a certain player may create an advantage.**
- 8) High-pointers should make position on the edge of the key and get good at shooting in this high percentage area. Passes should be placed on their heads and this must be constantly drilled.**
- 9) Always maintain a cover player at the point of the offense as we don't want easy layups being scored due to a lack of this position being covered.**
- 10) Make sure you attack an even front zone with a single front guard. (1 guard splitting 2 defenders in a 2-3 and a 2-1-2 Zone).**
- 11) Make sure you attack an odd guard front Zone with 2 guards. (2 guards against a 1-2-2, 1-1-2-1, a D-Cup and a 3-2 Zone).**
- 12) Use smart skip passes to make the Zone shift and have all players moving to receive passes and keep the defence honest by attacking as much as possible.**

The best offense to use against a Zone defence is transition. Remember players have to get back to positions in regards to playing a Zone and a good transition offense that beats them to this position, will create great shooting and rebounding opportunities.

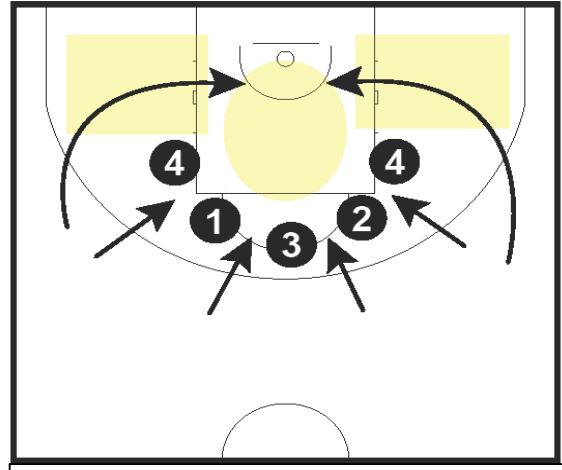
The next page shows the most popular Zone defences that your team will face and where the best places to attack the Zone are shown with solid arrows and the shaded areas are significant holes in which your players should look to press an advantage.

1

Zone Defences
Various Zones

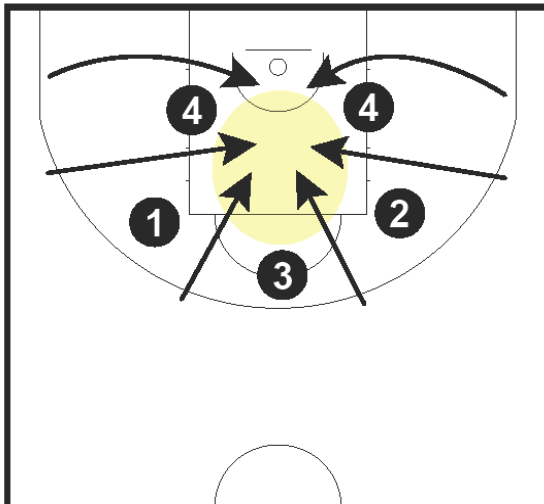
2-1-2 ZONE – Note the 5 gaps

2

Zone Defences
Various Zones

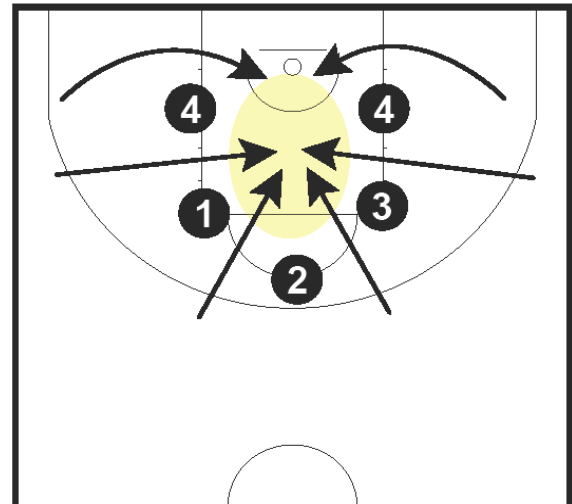
D-CUP – Note the huge gaps (shaded)

3

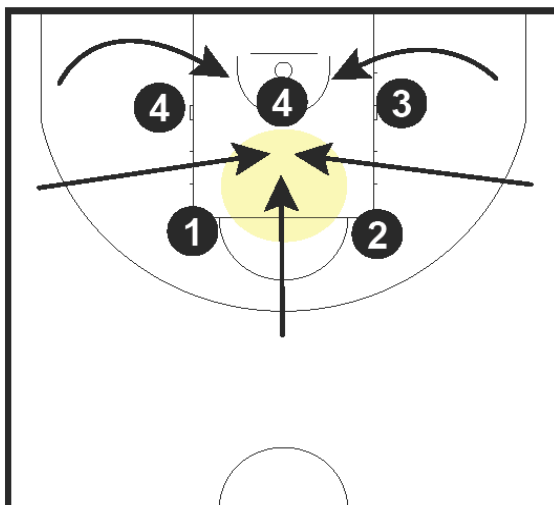
Zone Defences
Various Zones

3-2 ZONE – Note the 6 gaps

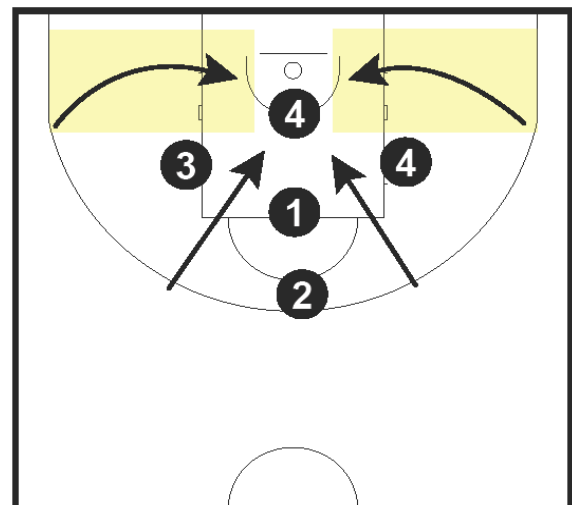
4

Zone Defences
Various Zones

1-2-2 ZONE – Note the 6 gaps

Zone Defences
Various Zones

2-3 ZONE – 5 gaps and big a hole (Centre)

Zone Defences
Various Zones

1-1-2-1 ZONE – 2 small, 2 big gaps

MAN TO MAN PLAY SETS

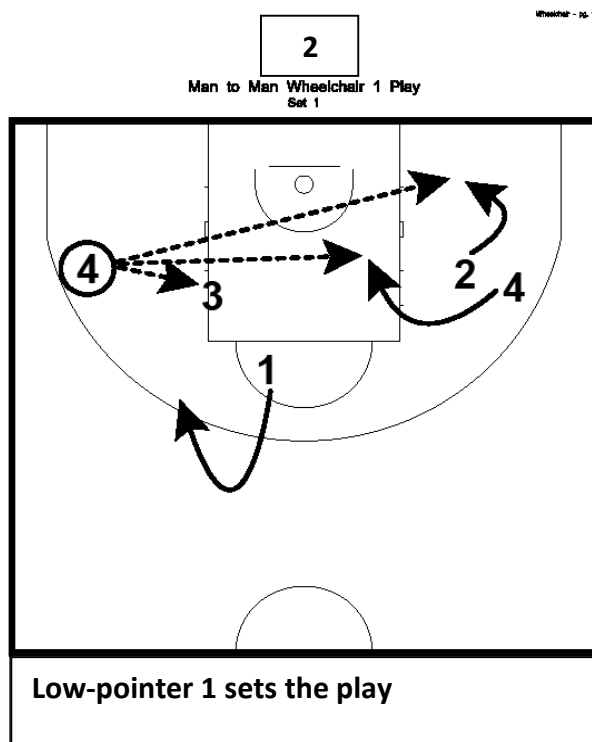
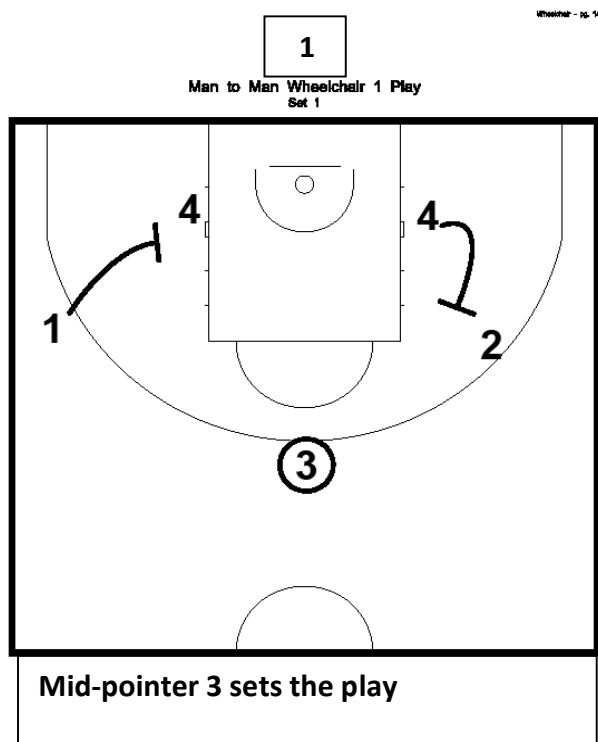
The Man to Man plays sets I use are simple and the first play set is designed to flow out of my primary offense which is transition. I number all the sets and the numbers coincide with the actual plays, so the players become familiar with the calls from the bench and react accordingly.

PLAY SET 1

The 1 stands for a designated point guard which is usually a Low-point or a Mid-point player and the other players balance the floor out with 2 on the left-side and 2 on the right-side. This is usually a Low with a High-pointer and a Mid/Low with a High-pointer on the opposite side. Now with all my sets this is just a starting point and the players then create the play using screens, seals, leads, cuts, mismatches and a general desire to get the defence off balance and out of position. The offense is only limited by the player's skills and imagination and if both are good; you will be a tough opponent to play against. With every set I run we need the following:

- Good floor balance and appropriate spacing
- Good shot discipline
- Relentless attack on the basket creating good shots and opportunities to rebound
- Defensive cover if the play breaks down
- Plenty of communication and positive talk
- Players always looking for the best options with the ball
- Players looking to create the best options when they don't have the ball

Below is the starting positions for the 1 play set and the players can start virtually anywhere on their designated side and create from there.



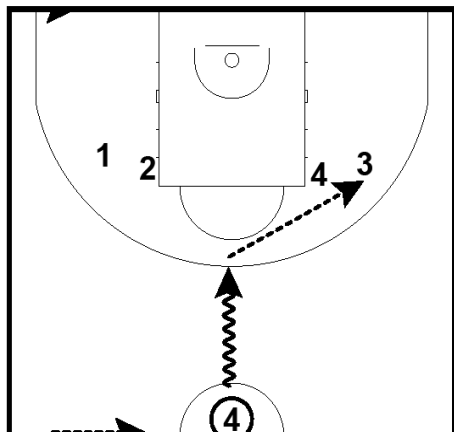
PLAY SET 2

A simple play set and one of my favourites as it works hard on gaining mismatches as a High-pointer can receive 2 screens from the Low-pointer. There is also room for hand offs and it can be a very creative play set. The name 2 is simple in that 2 players start left and right of the key and can be staggered or parallel for the initial set up. A High/Mid-pointer can start with the ball.

1

Wheelchair Man to Man Play Set 2
Set 2

Wheelchair - 15, 17

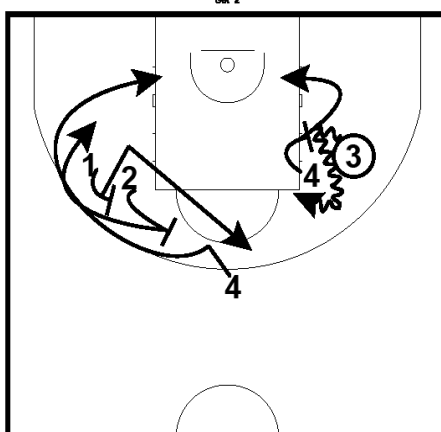


4 drives the ball down the split line and passes to 3

2

Wheelchair Man to Man Play Set 2
Set 2

Wheelchair - 15, 17

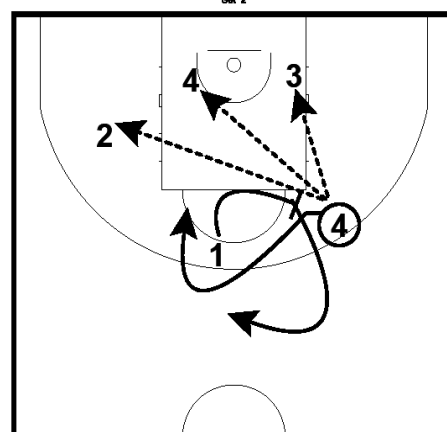


3 works off 4 while 1 and 2 set screens for 4 cutting hard to the outside looking for the mismatch on a Low-pointer

3

Wheelchair Man to Man Play Set 2
Set 2

Wheelchair - 15, 17

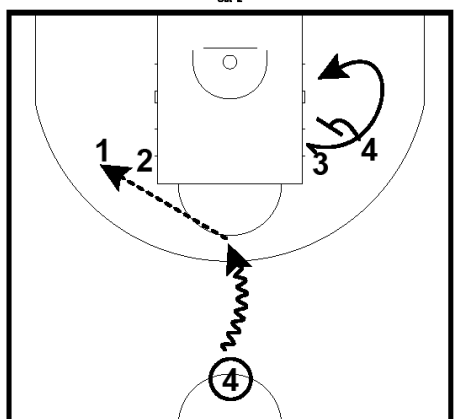


3 hands ball to 4 and cuts to the basket. 2 follows 4 in on the other side while 1 screens for 4 after the pass is made then heads to cover

4

Wheelchair Man to Man Play Set 2
Set 2

Wheelchair - 15, 17

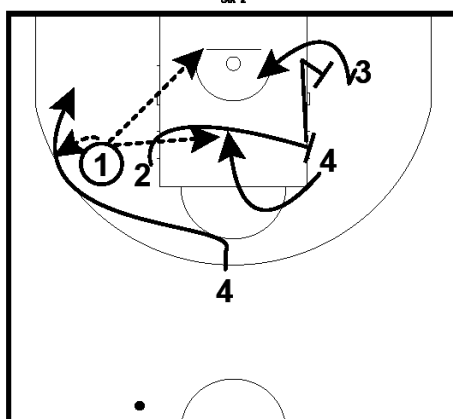


4 passes to 1 and heads over looking for the outside hand off. 4 and 3 on the right side run a pick and roll play.

5

Wheelchair Man to Man Play Set 2
Set 2

Wheelchair - 15, 17

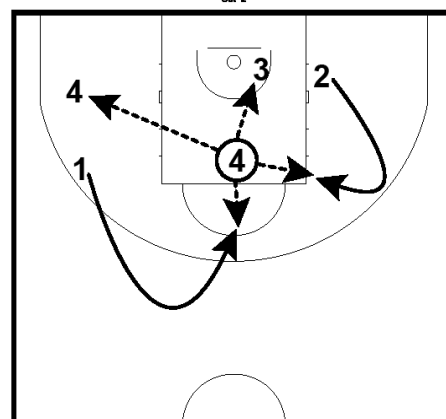


1 has several options, hand off to 4, pass to 3 or pass to 4 in the key. 2 sets a screen for 4 and then 3.

6

Wheelchair Man to Man Play Set 2
Set 2

Wheelchair - 15, 17



4 has multiple options and can shoot or pass to all 4 team mates.

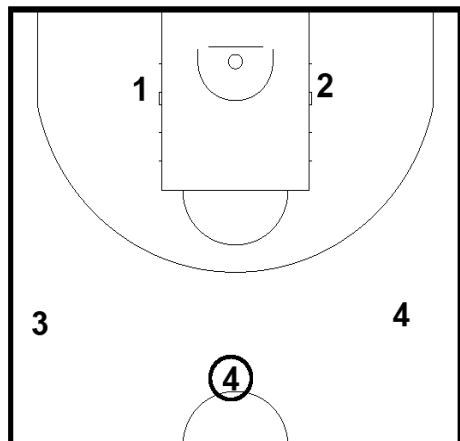
MAN TO MAN PLAY SET 3

The 3 play set is very effective against a pressure Man to Man defence, and the number describes the set which is very simple and quickly puts the pressure back on your opponent, if timed right.

1

Wheelchair man to Man playset 3
Set 3

Wheelchair - 16. 11

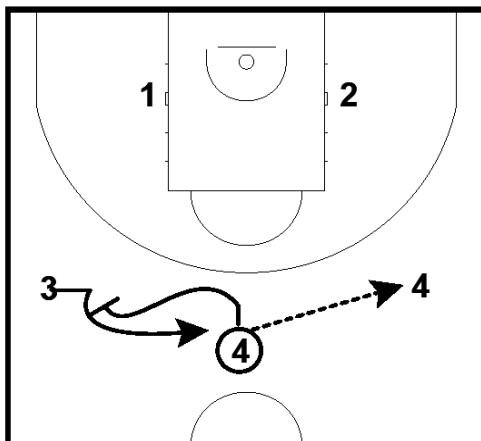


3, 4, 4 start out towards the centre line while 1, 2 head towards the low block.

2

Wheelchair man to Man playset 3
Set 3

Wheelchair - 16. 12

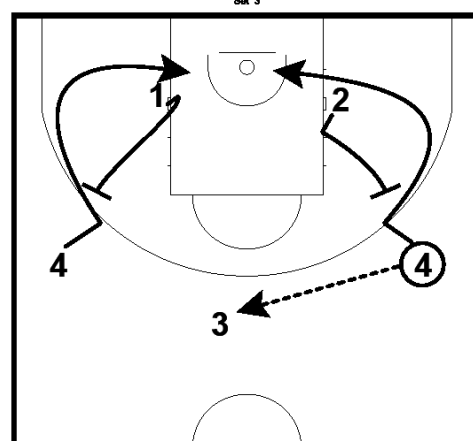


4 passes to 4 then screens 3 who works to get to the middle near the 3 point line.

3

Wheelchair man to Man playset 3
Set 3

Wheelchair - 16. 13

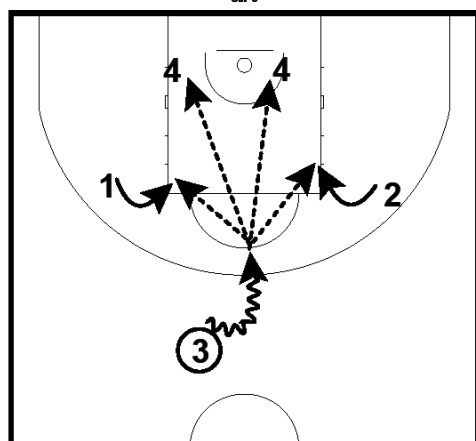


4 passes to 3 and then both 4's receive back picks from 1 and 2 looking for a mismatch or a free roll to the basket.

4

Wheelchair man to Man playset 3
Set 3

Wheelchair - 16. 14

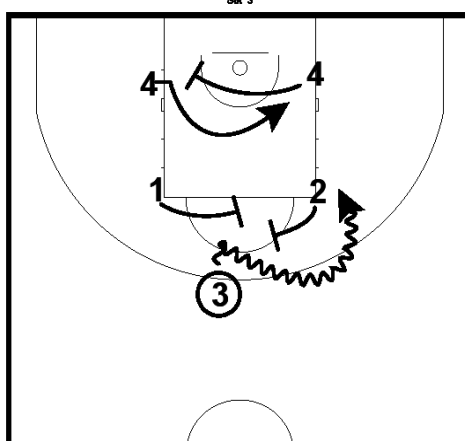


1 and 2 turn into the elbows and 3 has multiple passing options.

5

Wheelchair man to Man playset 3
Set 3

Wheelchair - 16. 15

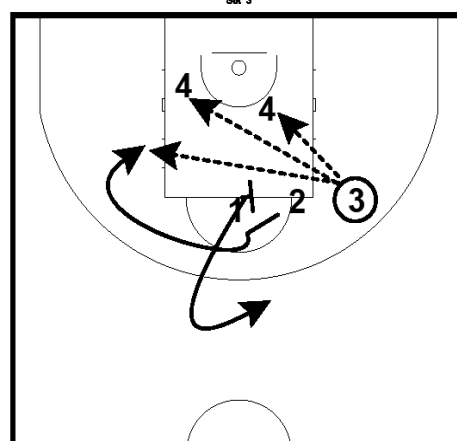


If the play breaks down 3 can work off a screen from 2 while 1 screens for 2 and the 4's screen for each other or they can post up

6

Wheelchair man to Man playset 3
Set 3

Wheelchair - 16. 16



3 has multiple options again for the pass or can shoot it if open.

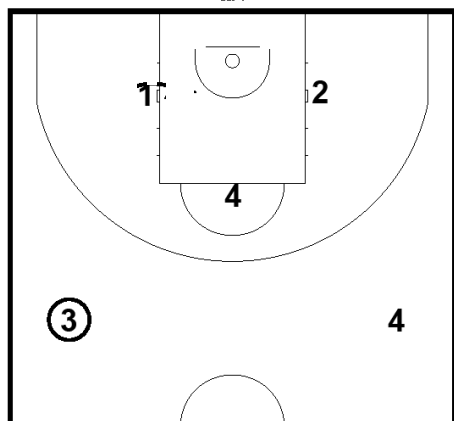
MAN TO MAN PLAY SET 4

This play set runs along similar line to 3 and it's another solid set to use against pressure defence. It gets its name from the 4 players surrounding the High-pointer at the foul line.

1

Wheelchair Man to Man Playset 4
Set 4

Wheelchair - 15 ft

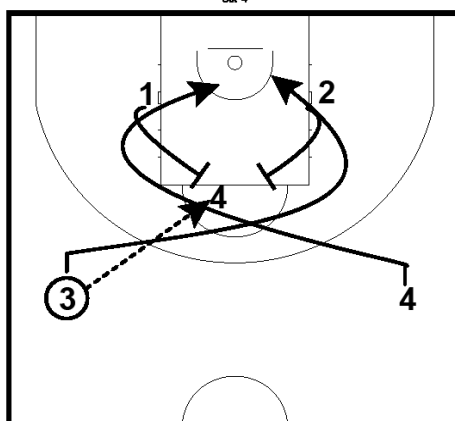


3 and 4 start up near centre line while 1 and 2 head towards the block. The other 4 sets up at the foul line.

2

Wheelchair Man to Man Playset 4
Set 4

Wheelchair - 15 ft

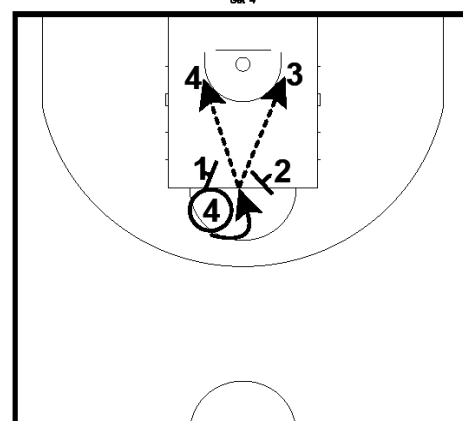


3 passes to 4 as 1 and 2 come up and set a triple screen at the foul line. 3 and 4 then cross with 3 the passer go first looking to run their defence into the screens and cut to the basket.

3

Wheelchair Man to Man Playset 4
Set 4

Wheelchair - 15 ft

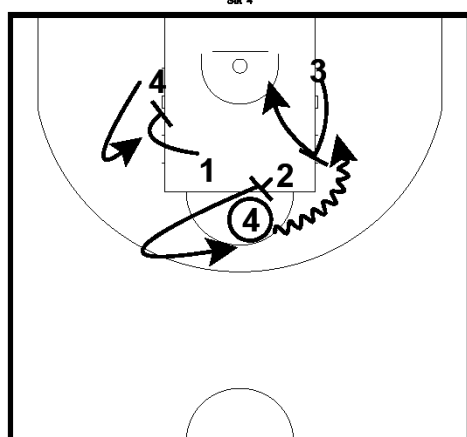


4 spins with the ball to face the basket and can shoot over the double screen from 1 and 2 or pass to 3 and 4.

4

Wheelchair Man to Man Playset 4
Set 4

Wheelchair - 15 ft

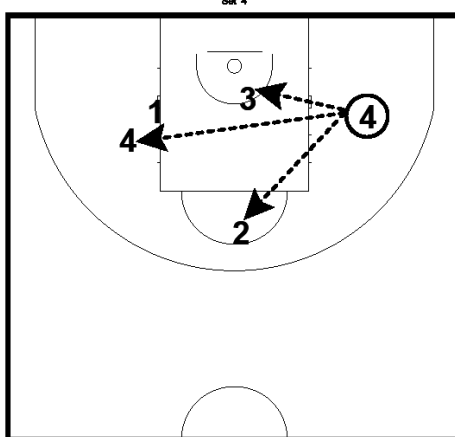


If the play breaks down then 2 and 3 come up to screen for 4 with the ball who drives to the right. 4 on the left curls looking to spot up over 1 who screens in. 3 cuts to the hoop while 2 heads out for cover and a shot option at the top.

5

Wheelchair Man to Man Playset 4
Set 4

Wheelchair - 15 ft

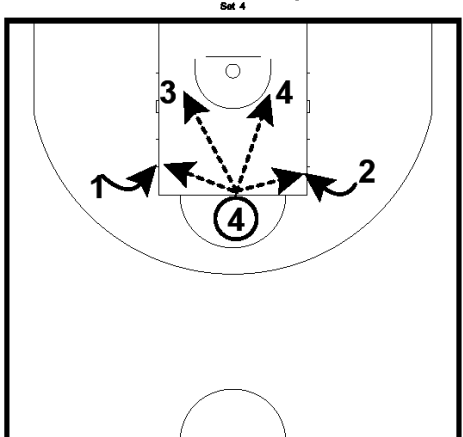


4 has multiple options to pass or shoot.

6

Wheelchair Man to Man Playset 4
Set 4

Wheelchair - 15 ft



In this play phase 1 and 2 have set screens much wider and have then curled in creating shot creating shot options.

OUT OF BOUNDS PLAYS

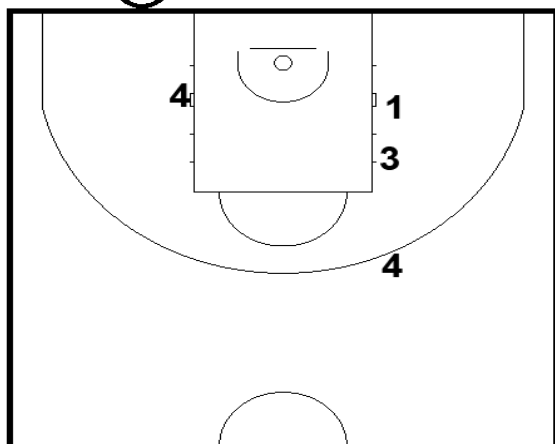
Below are 3 baseline out of bounds plays (POWER, LOAD, DOUBLE) that I use in games and we drill these to make sure all players know their roles. A baseline play should always be looking to attack the basket and score, not merely to get the ball into play. I am sure with a little creative thought you can design a play or improve on these 3. We always combine baseline plays with our half and full court scrimmage.

1

Wheelchair - pg. 4

Wheelchair Out of Bounds Play - Power

②



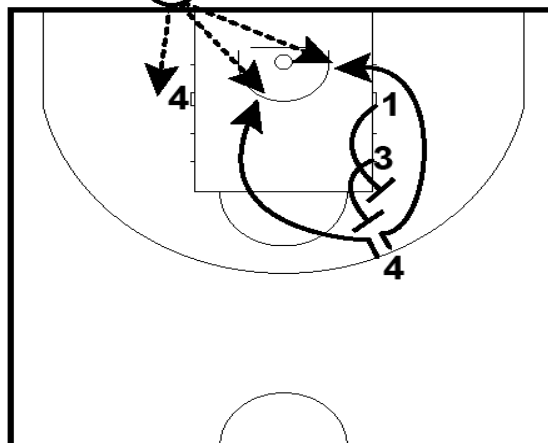
POWER – 4 sets up on the block while 1, 3 and 4 start away in a line on the other side of the key.

2

Wheelchair - pg. 7

Wheelchair Out of Bounds Play - Power

②



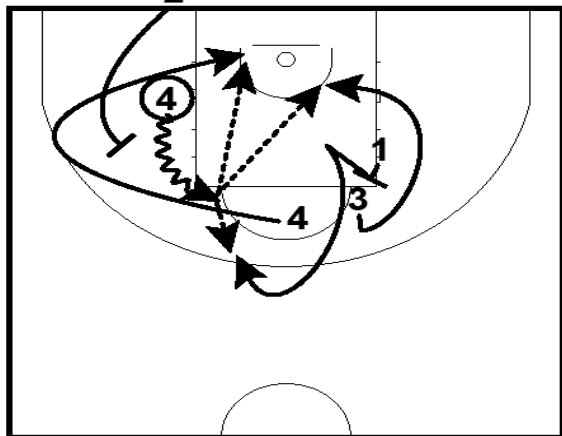
1 and 3 set a double screen for 4 who can cut either way to the basket. 2 either passes to 4 on the cut or lobs the ball to the other 4 posting on the block.

3

Wheelchair - pg. 9

Wheelchair Out of Bounds Play - Power

②



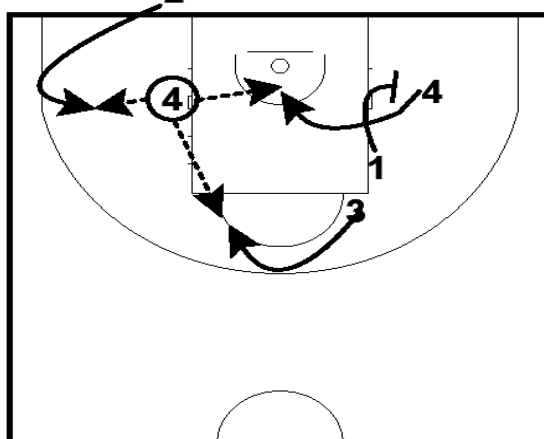
Option 2 – 4 has the ball on the post and dribbles the elbow. 1 picks for 3 who cuts while 4 cuts hard using the screen from 2 and 1 covers. 4 has multiple passes or can shoot.

4

Wheelchair - pg. 4

Wheelchair Out of Bounds Play - Power

②



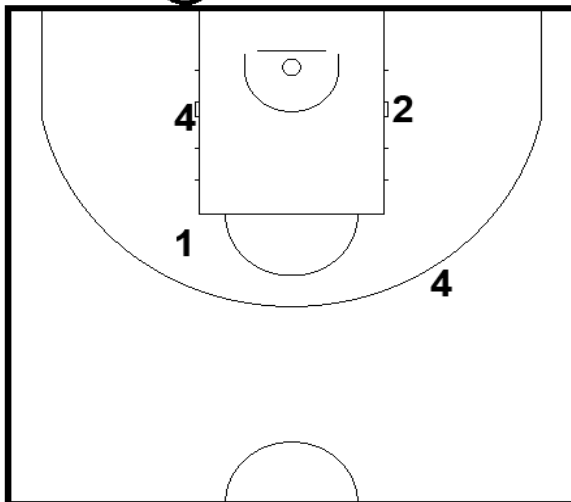
Option 3 – 4 cuts around down screen from 1, 3 spots up at the top and 2 cuts behind the ball looking for the shot.

1

Wheelchair - pg. 1

Wheelchair Out of Bounds - Double
Double

③



Double – basic set up 3 has the ball and we have the Low-pointers working with the High-pointers looking to create a mismatch.

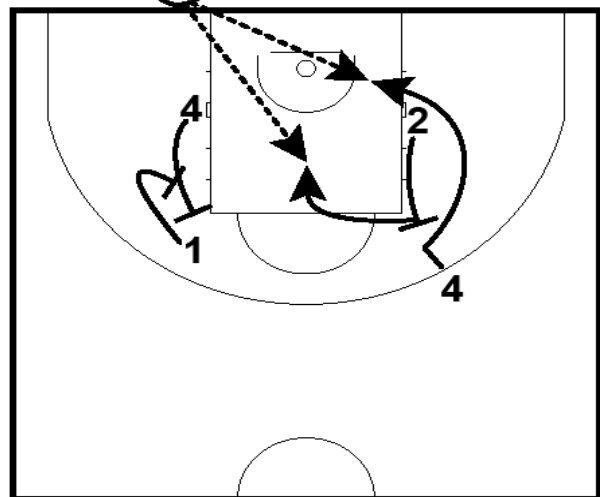
All Outlets Property

2

Wheelchair - pg. 2

Wheelchair Out of Bounds - Double
Double

③



2 back picks 4 and cuts to the middle while 4 attacks the basket on the right side. 4 back picks 1 who in turn back picks 4 (sequential pick).

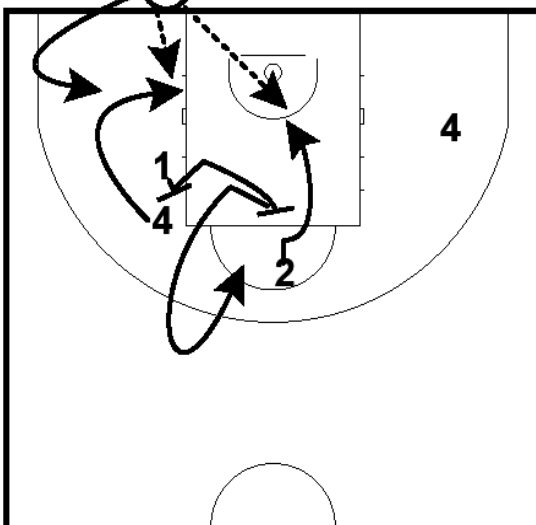
All Outlets Property

3

Wheelchair - pg. 3

Wheelchair Out of Bounds - Double
Double

③

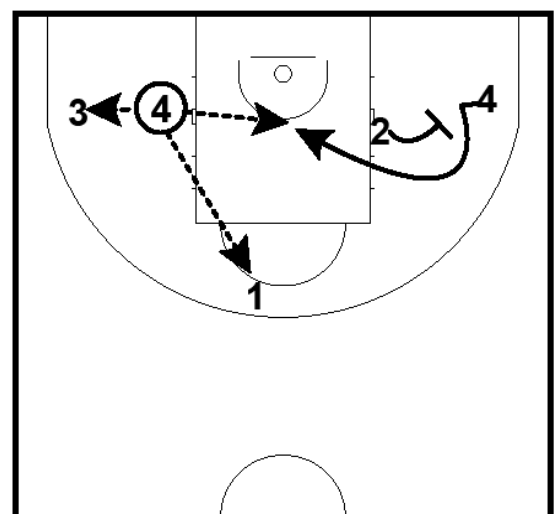


3 has multiple passing options and 1 can screen 2 and then heads for cover. 3 after the pass curls behind 4.

All Outlets Property

4

Wheelchair - pg. 4

Wheelchair Out of Bounds - Double
Double

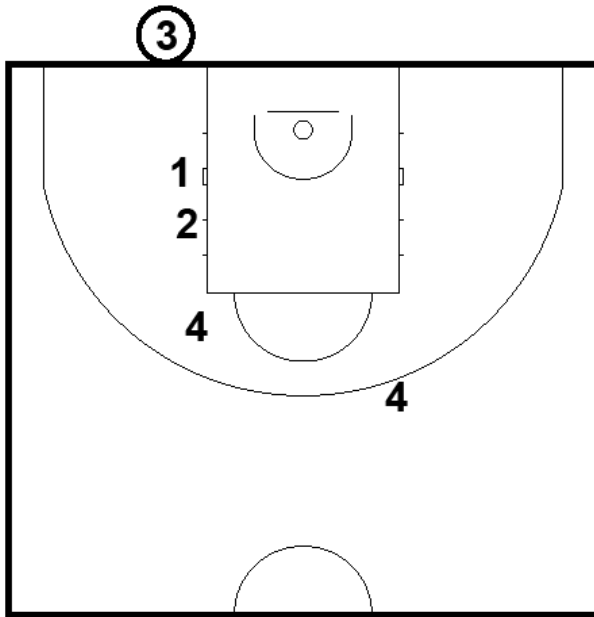
If the play breaks down slightly 2 can pick for 4 while 1 spots up and 3 has a screened shot from behind.

All Outlets Property

1

Wheelchair - pg. 4

Wheelchair Out of Bounds - Load



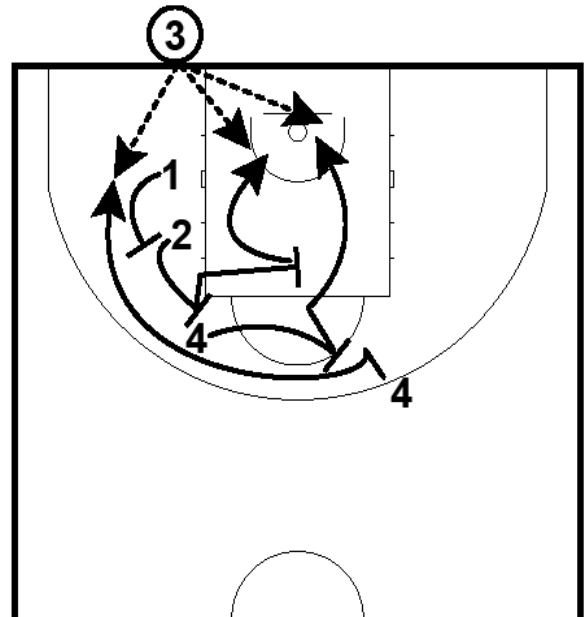
Load – On this set we load up 1, 2 and 4 with 4 on the off side and 3 passing in.

All Outlets Proprietary

2

Wheelchair - pg. 4

Wheelchair Out of Bounds - Load



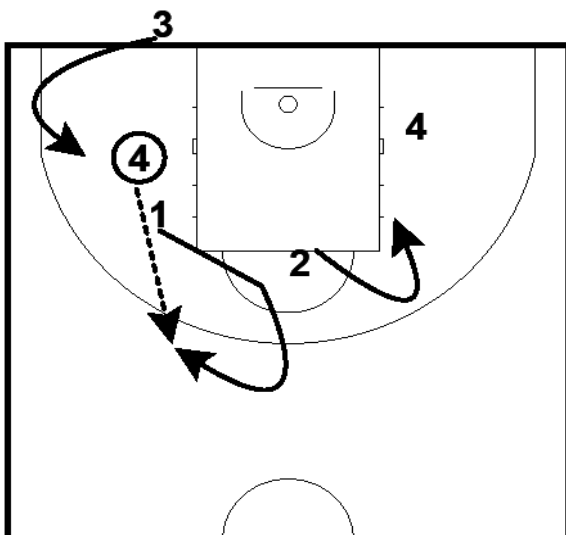
4 screens for the other 4 then they cut around off a double screen from 1 and 2. 2 continues on and back picks the screener and rolls to the basket. 3 has multiple options for the pass.

All Outlets Proprietary

3

Wheelchair -

Wheelchair Out of Bounds - Load



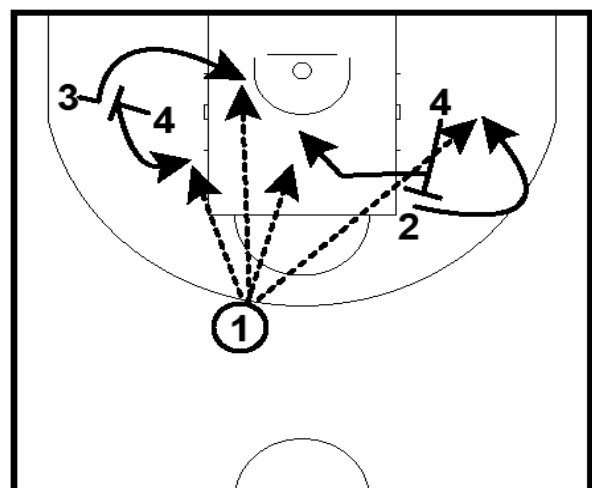
3 feeds 4 and curls behind for a possible screened shot 1 heads out to the point position to run a Man to Man 1 playset.

All Outlets Proprietary

4

Wheelchair - pg. 4

Wheelchair Out of Bounds - Load



From here the players screen, seal, lead and cut looking to create multiple options with rebounders.

All Outlets Proprietary

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

- 2 or 3 points down needing a 3 pointer to win or tie. Have at least 2-3 plays that get you an open 3 point shot.
- 1 point down, holding for a last shot – make sure everyone rebounds and you at least 8 seconds to shoot a shot giving you time for a rebound and second shot.
- Missing a foul shot on purpose to get a rebound and 2 or 3 point shot to tie or win.
- Time and score – When holding a small lead towards the end of the game players must use time off the shot clock and work to get good close shots as opposed to long outside prayers that are shot in the first 8 seconds of the offense. Players must have great shot discipline here and play smart to waste valuable seconds off the clock.
- Know your best free throw shooters – it's late in the game the opposition is behind but not too far down and the enemy is the clock, so expect them to foul you. Your best free throw shooters must have the ball in their hands at this critical time.
- 2 for 1 - If you're in a game with a 24 second shot clock in each of the first 3 quarters this situation may arise, and you should take advantage of it. Anytime there is enough time on the clock for you to get 2 possessions to your opponent's one, then this should be in the mind of your team. We are looking for a good quick shot that will allow us the last possession of at least 10 seconds or more once we get the ball over the half way line.
-

Another play is at the jump ball if you are confident you can win the tip then create a quick hit play that gets you off to a good start. There is nothing like getting an easy basket to start the game which can sap a little energy from your opponent. You need to allow time in your practice for special situations and this time will never be wasted and is also a valuable addition to a player's education.

Remember Coach always keep a time out up your sleeve so if needed you can impart some amazing last second strategy that will assure your team a victory. It is also handy to be able to move the ball to the centre line and closer to your basket as time may be a priority here.

I really love last second plays and special situations; it really does test your team's ability to win the close ones. I often quiz myself on what I would do in any given situation and it really is part of the challenge of becoming a good coach to have smart strategies in close games. Now there not always going to go your way but I like to think I give any team I coach the best possible chance of victory.

DEFENCE

Now it has often been stated the fatigue makes cowards of us all and this can certainly be applied to defence. Now the basketball has all sorts of amazing powers and a dead tired player will suddenly find he has energy for that next play provided they have the ball (also known as the pill) in their hand. The contrast to this is the poor defender who only has the chair and no magical boost of energy, apart from their ability to dig deep and make it a contest. The advantage here goes to the offense if your players are not in shape, and you must make sure every player in your program makes a commitment to make their bodies stronger, faster and at the same time this will result in better chair skills. A fitter player is a smarter player. I want my teams to be competitive, hard-nosed and aggressive.

ATTRIBUTES OF A GREAT INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM DEFENCE

- 1) Determination – above all its attitude that can carry you further than you thought possible. Really good defence is approximately 20 percent technical and 80 percent sheer desire and intensity and determination will often make up for a lack of skill.**
- 2) Conditioning – In the introduction I mentioned this important attribute and it cannot be ignored as well conditioned teams win championships and yes even Paralympic Gold Medals. The 1996 team was nowhere near as talented player for player as most of our rivals, but we had worked so hard on conditioning and our team motto was if you can't roll with us you can't play with us.**
- 3) Aggressiveness – There I no easy path for an aggressive basketball player as they put their body on the line for their team and even bleed for them. Aggressive players tend to agitate the opposition who know there always in for a hard contest even if they hold an advantage in other areas of the game.**
- 4) Hustle – it never ceases to amaze me that a player that hustles and has that sense of urgency to their play can often outplay a far more talented rival. Hustle is one of those qualities that a coach can encourage by having players form the habit of running into time outs, moving quickly from drill to drill, reacting fast, yet under control through hard training from one play phase to the next. Promote hustle with your team as part of your culture.**
- 5) Challenge the ball – I will often ask young players “who is the only player that can score”? I get some interesting answers usually involving one of our best scorers and yet they sometimes forget that only the player with the ball can score. So if the ball is close to the basket or in the hands of a decent scoring threat within their range, then it must be guarded. Here is an interesting statistic for coaches and players alike. 30 percent more shots will miss beyond what the offensive player normally makes by getting a hand in the sight line. As I stated in the shooting section, you must be a 2 eyed shooter and if the defence can disrupt that, it really is a significant advantage. Have your players contest every possible shot, it could be the key to having a winning season.**
- 6) Communication – Communicate with your team mates all the time on defence. There should be non-stop chatter from the start of the phase to the end of it as players give running commentary on where screens are being set and most importantly when you are beaten by your man. There is nothing worse than watching talented athletes play grave yard (non-talking dead silent) defence and seeing players picked and sealed out of the play. Players at the back of the defence must be the loudest communicators as they can see more of the floor.**
- 7) Vision – You must work diligently to see both your man and the ball. Peripheral vision is a skill that everyone can develop and it is the hall mark of outstanding defensive and offensive players who have the ability to see out their ears.**
- 8) Position – Maintain good position on defence all the time. Now position can mean having a strategy at times where you may called upon to disrupt a great screening player by denying them the pick, and yet letting them have free roll to the basket. Still the tried and true MAN-YOU-BASKET principle of playing defence is one that is hard to beat if every player on the team is committed to it.**
- 9) Defend the scorers – Every opposition team you play will have dominant scorers which are usually High-pointers because of their balance and sometimes superior height advantage. These players must be defended at all times and kept away from favourite scoring positions on the court.**

Every player on the team must take responsibility to help and recover when these threats are in your area. An effective way to defend the High pointer coming of the screen is to jump out and send them back to their matchup, now this does leave space for the screener to roll and this is a far preferable option than the star having an easy basket. While this pick and roll play is taking place all other defenders must hedge except the one playing the ball. I am not a fan of the triple switch as going to such lengths in a wheelchair basketball games will usually leave a player open for an easy layup. I much prefer hedge and help in towards the basket, as opposed to a total switch by 3 players which will leave a mismatch. You must not give up easy shots as this can demoralize a team and sap their energy.

- 10) Keep your hands on the Wheels – A simple fundamental of defence is keeping your hands on the wheels as much as you possibly can. Only take them off to challenge a shot, challenge an easy forward pass, foul the player making a layup, rebound the ball and make a steal. Hustle with the chair is my third rule after look after the ball and shoot good shots and it is here where keeping the hands attached is most important.
- 11) It has often been said by famous coaches that the 2 qualities that make a team great are defence and rebounding. Defensive rebounding is all about making and getting good chair position then laying your chair on your opponent taking them out of the contest.
- 12) Pride – Is the accumulation of all the previously listed points. This is never felt by poorly conditioned and undisciplined teams.

CONCLUSION

It has been an honour to share some of my philosophy and thoughts with you in this manual and as this is my first ever draught, I will be expanding on every topic and make it as comprehensive as possible in future copies. I am so grateful to have had so many wonderful experiences coaching wheelchair basketball. The people are what make the sport truly unique and I thank them all for enriching my life and the lives of so many around them. Coaches and Players bring I.C.E with you to every training session and game.

- I = Intensity
- C = Concentration
- E = Enthusiasm

Do this with Passion, Purpose and Pride and you will not only advance everything and everyone around you, but you will grow to love this dynamic game called Wheelchair Basketball.



Coach Mark Walker 2010

