

# Del Harris's Notes

## DEFENSIVE REMINDER NOTES:

1. YOU MUST GET YOUR KEY PLAYERS—BEST PLAYERS AND LEADER/LIEUTENANTS TO BE ON YOUR SIDE 1<sup>ST</sup>.
2. TALKING IS THE ENGINE OF DEFENSE. CALL LOUD AND AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE.
3. TRANSITION DEFENSE IS THE KEY. WITHOUT THIS YOU HAVE NOTHING. ORDER OF TRANSITION DEFENSE IS BASKET-BALL-THREATS. FORGET ABOUT WHICH MAN IS YOURS. SORT THAT OUT ONLY LATER WHEN IT IS SAFE. DO NOT GO LOOKING FOR YOUR MAN—PICK UP THE OPEN MAN. THE TRAILING DEFENDER WILL HAVE TO PICK UP THE FIFTH MAN REGARDLESS OF MISMATCH.
4. HAVE SET SWITCHING RULES THAT ARE PRACTICED AND CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD.
5. KEEP THE BALL ON ONE SIDE EARLY SO YOU CAN ESTABLISH THE WEAKSIDE DEFENSE. OVERCOMMIT AND GET TO HELP SPOTS AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE. SKIP PASSES WON'T BEAT YOU—NOR WILL THEY WIN FOR YOU.
6. DEFINE THE SWITCHING CONCEPTS. DESIGNATE SWITCH PARTNERS ON YOUR TEAM. USE 3 T'S—TALK, COME TOGETHER, TOUCH.  
GUIDELINES TO SELECT FROM:
  - a. MUST SWITCH TO DENY SOMETHING, NOT JUST EXCHANGE MEN. BE AGGRESSIVE TO TURN THE CUTTER AND DENY A STEPUP OR SLIP.
  - b. SWITCH BIG IN LITTLE OUT, NOT REVERSE.
  - c. WITHIN 15 FEET OF GOAL AS NEEDED.
  - d. ON PICK/ROLL WHEN OUT OF POSITION
  - e. WHEN HELPER HAS TO COMMIT TO PENETRATION
  - f. ON EMERGENCY AT ANY TIME TO SAVE EASY GOAL
7. CONCEPT—FORCE THE EXTRA PLAY TO BE MADE. MISMATCHES DO NOT BEAT YOU, BUT OPEN SHOTS WILL.
8. ESTABLISH SHOTBLOCKING EARLY AND THEN JUST FAKE AT IT UNLESS YOU HAVE A CLEAR LOOK.
9. DENY THE LAYUP EARLY SO THAT YOU ESTABLISH GOAL DOMINANCE EARLY AND WHILE THERE IS STILL NO FOUL TROUBLE.
10. FOUL LATE IN THE GAME WHEN THE OFFENSIVE MANS BACK IS TO THE GOAL WHEN STRATEGY CALLS FOR FOULING IN THE 3-POINT NEED SITUATION FOR THE OFFENSE. PRACTCE THE WRAPAROUND TECHNIQUE.
11. THE DEFENDERS SHOULDERS SHOULD BE BELOW THE LEVEL OF THE MAN HE IS GUARDING, UNTIL HE ELEVATES TO CHALLENGE SHOT OR THE OFFENSE TAKES HIM DEEP INSIDE. THIS IS ESPECIALLY A GOOD TECHNIQUE TO USE IN DEFENDING THE POST WITH HIS BACK TO THE GOAL.
12. BODY UP FIRST ON PICKS.

## **Basic Bullet Points I Want Our Team to Understand and Execute—Del Harris**

1. Guard must loop to get open when the ball is out of bounds full court. Do not catch with your back to the half-line.
2. Guard should also loop toward middle when on the side for the fast break outlet pass. Bring the ball up in a line halfway between the sideline and middle of court.
3. First big man out must run to the block opposite the side that the ball is advanced.
4. Wings must run wide and look for early pass ahead, but if the pass is not caught within two steps past the half-line, the strong side wing must run to the deep corner.
5. On a pass to the low post, the cutters must cut hard and the cut should be to the baseline or to the strong side corner if there is no room on the baseline.
6. When the ball is posted or there is an isolation play in the mid-post area, after the wing has cut baseline or to corner, the first player left out front on top must cut well past the vertical ball line toward the strong side sideline.
7. If a man is on the perimeter is the ball is driven toward him, he should move up toward the ball or cut back door cut if he is denied on his step toward the ball.
8. If a man is on the perimeter behind the ball when it is penetrated, move to a position quickly behind the ball, past the vertical ball line.
9. If you are in the post and the ball is dribbled toward you, you must move opposite the ball.
10. A wing player must cut toward the basket, if he passes to the corner vs. any defense.

11. If a player draws a double team, he has done his job. Pass the ball to an open man. Your teammates have a 4 v. 3 advantage.
12. Players must set up when a man comes to set a pick, whether the pick is on a cutter or a ballhandler.
13. Big men should dribble handoff or pitch out to a small player if he has the ball near or on the perimeter and has not easy pass to make.
14. If a player, especially in the low post draws a double team, he has done his job. He must pass the ball by making an easy play, not a home run
15. No early 3-point shots unless the shooter is clearly open and is at least a 38% shooter behind the line. Game situation may even prevent this one.
16. No forced shots, passes or drives on the entry side of the offense. Each must be an easy play with a high percentage chance to provide a score.
17. Players 4 and 5 must go to every rebound.
18. Know how to use the various stunts off of low post curl cuts, medium post curl cuts and the high curl cut wide of the elbow.
19. Be sure to understand the basics of pick and roll.
20. Know the basics of the simple passing game.

## BULLETS ON THE USE OF PICK AND ROLLS

1. DO NOT OVERUSE THE PICK AND ROLL. FOR MANY YEARS I SAID IN CLINICS THAT H.S. AND COLLEGE COACHES SHOULD UTILIZE THE MOVE, ESPECIALLY ONCE THE 3-POINT LINE WAS INTRODUCED. THIS MADE THE PICK AND POP SUCH A GREAT ALTERNATE OPTION.
2. NOW I AM SAYING TO USE IT WISELY. TOO MANY TEAMS AT PRO AND COLLEGE LEVELS ARE RUNNING SO MANY THAT THE BALL HANDLER SELDOM HAS AN OPEN MIDDLE TO DRIVE INTO TO CREATE OFFENSE.
3. A TRULY GREAT PLAYER MAY BE ABLE TO BEAT THE DOUBLES THAT COME IN PICK AND ROLL DEFENSE—WHICH OCCUR OFTEN, ESPECIALLY LATE ON THE CLOCK. MOST CANNOT.
4. A GREAT PLAYER DOESN'T NEED THE PICK TO BEAT HIS MAN. SO DON'T OVER-DO AND TAKE PENETRATION OR MOTION OPTIONS.
5. THERE ARE 5 PICK AND ROLL ANGLES BUT THE BEST TO USE ARE THE MIDDLE, THE HIGH WING AND THE ELBOWS.
6. TEACH USING THE RE-PICK OPTIONS ON PICK AND ROLL. WHEN THEY BEAT THE FIRST ONE, YOU CAN COME RIGHT BACK AND SET THE SECOND.
7. TO USE THE RE-PICK AS A SET PLAY OPTION, THE FIRST PICK IS A SLOPPY ONE IN ORDER TO SET UP THE SECOND ON THAT WILL BE IN CLOSER.
8. USE PLAYS THAT INVOLVE MULTIPLE PICK AND ROLLS OCCASIONALLY. THE MAIN PLAY WILL USUALLY BE THE SECOND ONE, BUT TAKE THE FIRST GOOD LOOK.
9. SLIP CUTS ARE GOOD BY THE PICKER, BUT THE BEST TIME IS WHEN THE PICKER'S DEFENDER SHOWS HIMSELF INTO VISION TOO SOON IN A HARD SHOW OR TRAP.
10. DO NOT OVERUSE SLIP CUTS OR YOU WILL HAVE PLAYERS BAIL OUT TOO OFTEN AND YOU WILL FEWER GOOD PICKS.
11. OFTEN FOLLOW A SLIP CUT WITH A SECOND PICK AND ROLL—CALLED "SLIP ONE, PICK ONE".
12. TEACH THE PICKERS TO BE ABLE TO CHANGE THEIR ANGLE ON THE PICK QUICKLY RELATIVE TO HOW THE BALL DEFENDER IS PLAYING THE BALL.
13. THE PICKER WOULD ULTIMATELY LIKE TO CATCH THE BALL DEFENDER'S NEAR SHOULDER ON THE PICKER'S CHEST.
14. TEACH THE FLAT PICK TO BE SET AT THE TOP ANGLE WITH THE PICKERS BUTT PARALLEL WITH THE BASELINE IN AN ATHLETIC, BENT-KNEE POSITION. HE CAN SHIFT QUICKLY, KEEPING BOTH FEET DOWN TO THE ANGLE THAT HELPS HIM PICK OFF THE BALL DEFENDER BETTER.
15. THE FLAT BACK PICK CAN BE SET AT THE HIGH WING ANGLE AS WELL. SHIFT QUICKLY TO THE ANGLE THE DEFENSE PUSHES THE BALL.
16. IF THEY ARE GOING UNDER ON THE BALLHANDLER, SET THE ACTION LOWER.
17. IF THEY ARE GOING OVER THE TOP, SET THEM HIGHER.
18. IF THEY ARE TRAPPING, SET THOSE HIGHER AS WELL TO GIVE MORE SPACE FOR SLIPPING, TO STRETCH THE DEFENSE'S ROTATIONS AND TO GIVE THE BALLHANDLER MORE SPACE TO OPERATE.
19. THE BALLHANDLER MUST TRY TO LOWER HIS INSIDE SHOULDER AND TURN THE CORNER TOWARD THE BASKET WHEN POSSIBLE TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE DEFENSE.
20. DO NOT ALLOW LOOPING IN A SEMI-CIRCLE BY THE BALLHANDLER.

21. GET THE PICKERS TO RUN INTO THE PICKS INSTEAD OF WADING INTO THEM.
22. WALKING INTO PICKS GIVES THE DEFENSE A BETTER CHANCE TO COMMUNICATE AND ADJUST.
23. THE BALLHANDLER SHOULD SET UP HIS DEFENDER FIRST BY JUKING AWAY FROM THE DIRECTION HE WANTS TO GO BE ABLE TO USE THE PICK BETTER, JUST AS A PLAYER IN A 1 ON 1 WOULD DO. THEN COME TIGHT OFF THE PICKER.
24. UTILIZE DOUBLE PICKS FOR THE PICK AND ROLL SOME BY POPPING THE SHOOTER AND ROLLING THE BETTER POST MAN.
25. SET A PICK ON A BIG PICKER BY A SMALL TO FREE UP THE PICKER TO SET A BETTER PICK AT THE START OF THE ACTION FREQUENTLY.
26. DON'T OVERUSE SETTING BALL SCREENS AS THE SHOT CLOCK RUNS DOWN. IT IS TOO EASY TO TRAP OR SWITCH AND MAKE IT HARD TO GET A GOOD SHOT, IF THE DEFENSE KNOWS IT'S COMING EVERY TIME.
27. DO NOT USE A PICK AND ROLL FOR A GAME WINNING SHOT BECAUSE THE GOOD TEAMS WILL HAVE A LINEUP IN THE GAME THAT CAN SWITCH OR TRAP AND PREVENT THE OPEN LOOK. USE PLAYS THAT ARE LESS SUSCEPTIBLE TO SWITCHING BEATING YOU.
28. ON SETTING RANDOM PICK AND ROLLS:
  - THERE ARE OPPORTUNITIES TO HAVE A BIG MAN RUN OUT TO SET A RANDOM PICK AND ROLL ON SIGNAL BY THE BALL HANDLER OR JUST ON HIS OWN AFTER A TRANSITION OR A PLAY SET HAS FAILED TO PRODUCE THE DESIRED SHOT, BUT PRIOR TO THE CLOCK RUNNING DOWN.
  - WHEN THIS HAPPENS, EVERY PLAYER MUST KNOW THE SPACING SPOTS THAT CAN BE FILLED IN ORDER TO ALLOW PROPER SPACING FOR THE ACTION TO PRODUCE A POSITIVE RESULT.
  - THERE ARE FIVE SPACING POSITIONS THAT THE REMAINING THREE PLAYERS CAN SHOOSSE FROM TO GET TO QUICKLY TO OPEN THE FLOOR, UNLESS THE PICK OCCURS IN THE CORNER:
    - THE LOW POST OPPOSITE THE BALL AND
    - THE WEAK SIDE WING AREAS—BOTH THE FOUL LINE EXTENDED AND THE 45 DEGREE ANGLE ON THE HIGH WING.
    - EITHER OR BOTH CORNERS.

## Some Specifics Regarding Pick and Roll Defense

### 1. Avoid “stringing out” too far on showing/hedging from the picker.

It is **fine to jump up hard in a position parallel**, or virtually so, to the sideline and go a step or even two with the ballhandler as a defensive option.

**Continuing to string out** with the ball handler forces **the team defense has to rotate to your man** on any kind of show.

The **stringer** is in a position **too far out to rotate back** safely to any man.

**Remedy: After a defender shows**, he needs to recover quickly **“down the line”** toward the free throw lane, **not out toward the sideline**.

### 2. When defending elbow area picks, show **hard or soft**, but:

If you **show hard**, your man will roll to the basket and will have to be picked up by a teammate.

**Show high, stay high**. The defender on the elbow who **shows aggressively** must be prepared to cover the next player who comes up high---“**show high, stay high!**”

If you **show soft** at a 45 degree angle, then you **cannot string out toward the corner** more than a step.

**Show “down the line”** so as to be able to stay in a position whereby you are able to slow down the ball and still make it hard to pass to the roller by **staying in the pass lane with active hands**.

**Weak side help is vital**. As in showing soft (covering the turn) on the top pick and roll, the defender goes down the line but still needs help.

### 3. To Turn the pick/roll down? If you try to mix your pick and roll defenses by “**turning it down**” here are some suggestions:

First, **do not be afraid to try it**. But then do not be like many NBA teams and overdo it. It is a good **changeup**, when done right, and a lot of teams do not do a good job of going against it. (But that is changing in the NBA now as **teams overuse** it.)

**The defender on the picker** must **call it out loud** and clear three times, (whatever signal you decide to use) and the ball defender **cannot change positions** until he hears it, no matter what the game plan is.

**The picker defender** must get into a strong, **athletic position** ready to defend any attacker **and stay in it**. This is crucial.

**The picker defender** must get into a line **between the ball and the basket** but ought not to be any further from the picker than **an arm’s length plus a step**, certainly no more than two steps.

**The biggest concerns** are:

1. the **ballhandler splitting** between him and the picker, leaving the ball defender behind,
2. and allowing a quick short bounce pass (“**pocket pass**”) to the picker whereby he can catch and get to the goal or catch/shoot so quickly no one can get to him.

If the ball is **penetrated** the picker’s defender will try to **defend both players as long as he can**, by dropping **down the line toward the goal**.

**The ball defender** must try to **recover** back in front, but the help defender must be ready to **commit to the ball if he has to**.

**The defender on the ball** must quickly jump to the high side of the ballhandler, **maintaining at least a touch** with his man, and be in a position to force him to go to the sideline/baseline instead of penetrating to the middle.

**Do not get too high** on the top of the ballhandler. Be only slightly higher than parallel with the sideline, not turned too far toward the baseline because it **encourages a split**

**The ball defender** must try to maintain contact with the ballhandler to influence him toward the baseline and still try to **get back into a position** in front of the ball as soon as he can.

**In an emergency** he may have to **call out for an emergency** or “**late switch**” when he sees he is **beaten badly**.

**The weakside defenders** must be **greatly involved in every pick and roll defense—it takes 5 players**.

The weak side defenders must move in to give help in the lane because the two prime defenders cannot get it done by themselves every time.

If the picker is a roller, the weak side low man must help greatly and rotate to him if necessary. Normally the **ball defender then must rotate** to the weakside to pick up an open man, normally at the top.

**If the picker is a shooter**, and he pops back, the front weak side defender must rotate to him, if the ball comes back to him.

**In that rotation, the picker's defender will rotate across** to pick up the weak side low defender's man who will have to rotate on out to the corner or wing.