



## **THREE OF A KIND**

### **Course 03: Coach Zeljko Obradovic**

#### **Lesson 05: Pick & Roll Defense**

**Language: English**

### **PICK & ROLL DEFENSE**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The large majority of offensive philosophies that European teams use include the pick & roll. The evolution in recent years has been impressive and we can see a great variety of uses of the pick & roll in different situations and different areas of the court.

#### **EVOLUTION**

Initially, particularly when the shot clock was 30 seconds, the pick & roll was used as a last resort if the offense had not created a scoring opportunity. It always took place in the middle of the floor, and either the point guard or the best scorer on the team would execute the pick & roll with the center.

With the change in the shot clock to 24 seconds many teams began using it as part of their plays looking for an immediate scoring opportunity through penetration or a shot.

As of a few years ago, pick & roll situations have evolved and now they are not only used to finish a play but also to create mismatches. This option

requires players to have a better understanding of the game because the play will finish following a read of the defense. A middle pick roll situation can create a mismatch in the low post and lead to an easy score.

## **DEFENDING THE PICK & ROLL**

Based on this evolution, our defense has had to change working on many more aspects and not only prevent our opponent from an easy score or penetration.

Defending the pick & roll has evolved from being a two man defense to a three man defense (defender of the ball handler, screener and the nearest help), to a five man defense. This is fundamental in order to achieve our goals when defending the pick & roll.

## **GOALS**

The first obvious goal is to prevent dribble penetration as well as an easy, open shot attempt. The two defenders directly involved in the pick & roll must follow two guidelines:

- Aggressiveness. This is more important than the second guideline. This may lead to a foul every now and then, but we prefer this to permitting the offense to take the initiative due to a lack of aggressiveness of our defense.
- Defend the pick & roll based on our opponents characteristics (shooter, penetrator or passer) and the area on the court where the situation takes place.

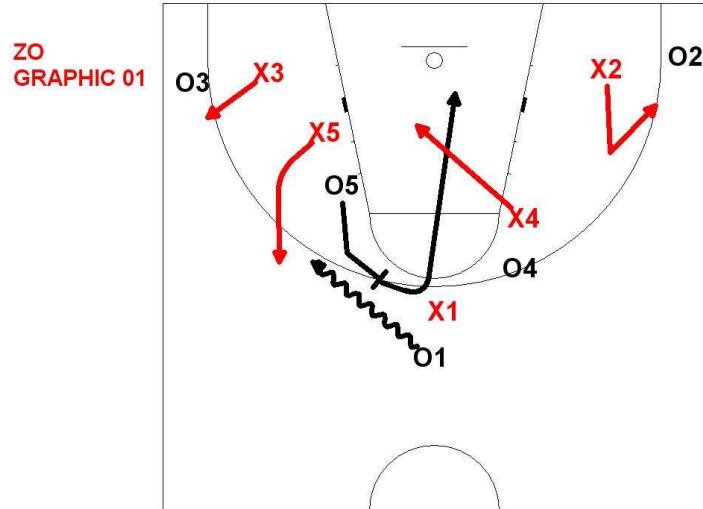
The remaining defenders should work to make the relevant rotations following the guidelines below:

- Aggressiveness.
- Make the rotations (or fake the rotations) based on our opponents characteristics, our game plan and / or the distance from the basket where the pick & roll takes place.
- Trying to avoid that a mismatch is created following the rotations.

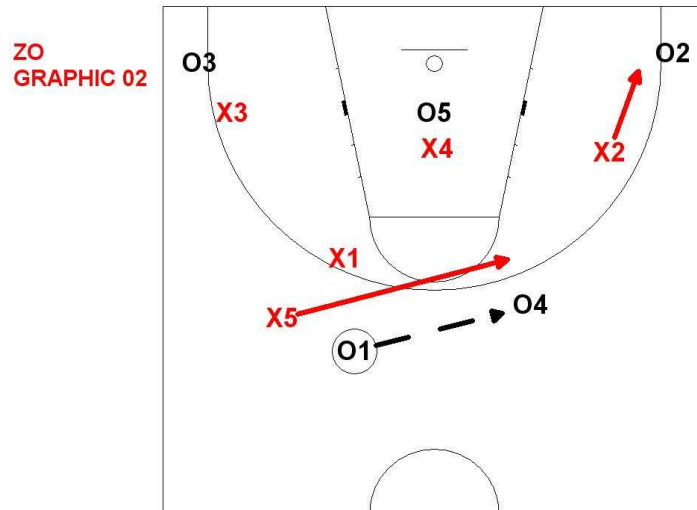
We will see an example illustrated below of a pick & roll situation (Horns or Double Elbow) where we work on all of the goals listed below:

- Aggressiveness.
- No immediate advantages.
- No mismatches following defensive rotations.
- Aggressive and active rotations and fake rotations.

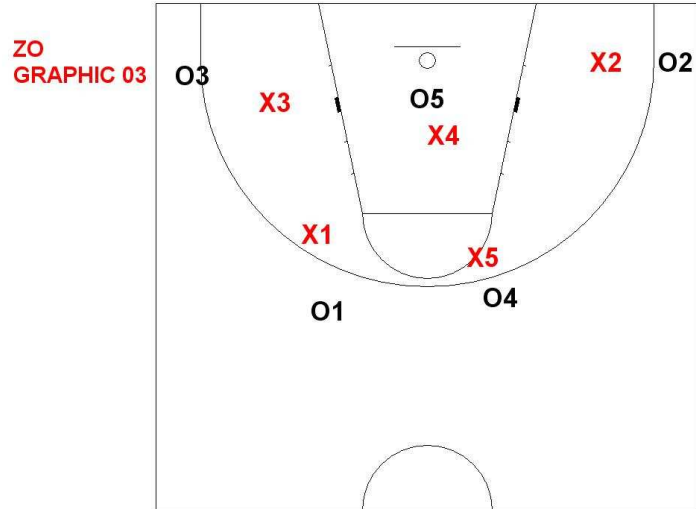
Graphic 1: X1 aggressively defends the ball, X5 hedges aggressively. X2 fakes a rotation towards O4 (the fake will be held for longer or shorter depending upon the shooting range of O2 and O4).



Graphic 2: X2's fake will give X5 more time to recover and defend O4.



Graphic 3: After we have covered the initial action, we will switch the two defensive big men to avoid any dangerous mismatches.



Graphic 4: Here we see the rotation that can take place if O4 is an excellent shooter.

