EUROLEAGUE BASKETBALL INSTITUTE

THREE OF A KIND

Course 01: Coach Ettore Messina

Lesson 12: Using Sreens

Language: English

USING SCREENS

When teaching how to use screens, it is very important to progressively teach the progressions used in the explanation of the fundamentals, and take care of the details, especially by emphasizing the correct foot work, the right use of spaces and the rhythm of the action.

When we set a screen for a player, our goal is to obtain an advantage with regards to space or time, to take a shot or to play 1v1 against an opponent who is late. If we do not shoot immediately, it is very important to keep this advantage over the defense, not wasting anything that we have achieved.

The "main concepts" in our teaching of using screens are two:

1. When we set a screen, we always want that both the screener and the player being screened for to create two passing lanes to their teammate who has the ball.
2. Often the player setting the screen will be open if he takes advantage of the right defensive movement that wants to prevent an easy reception of the ball for the player being screened for. In fact, many offensive sets require that a good shooter starts the action screening for a teammate, then quickly turns towards the ball and receives it.

The player being screened for must work without the ball; this is very important for the success of the action. At the beginning I want him to take a position far from the screener, where his defender cannot see him and the ball at the same time (**diagram 1**). After trying to catch the ball, he could change direction and speed, to exploit his teammate's screen (**diagram 2**).

LESSON 12
SCREENS
DIAGRAM 01
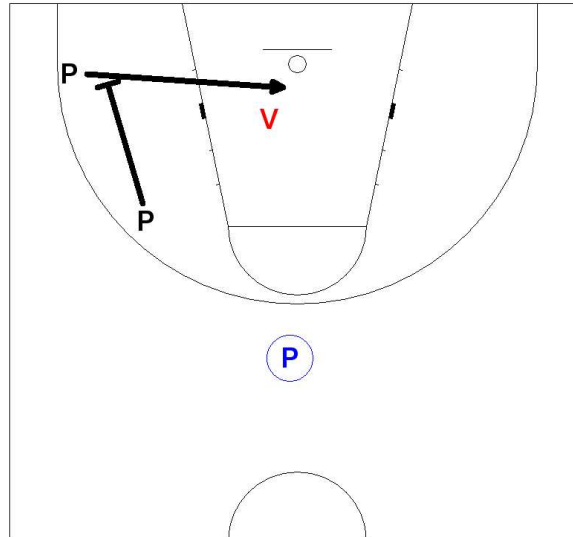
LESSON 12
SCREENS
DIAGRAM 02
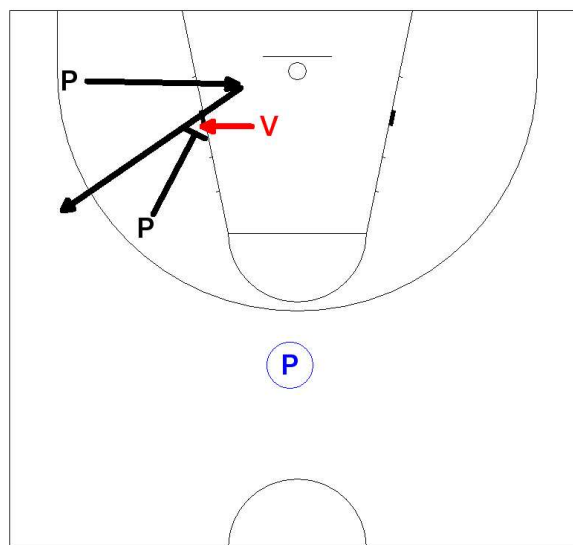
Some players, such as the excellent shooter Louis Bullock, while they are coming off the screen temporarily check their movement so the defender following them will be closer, and just in that moment they start again with a burst of speed and a distance advantage (**diagram 3**).

LESSON 12
SCREENS
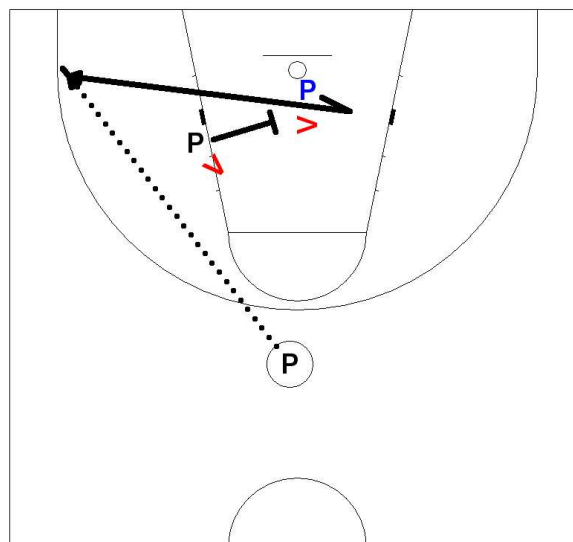DIAGRAM 03

STOP AND CONTACT
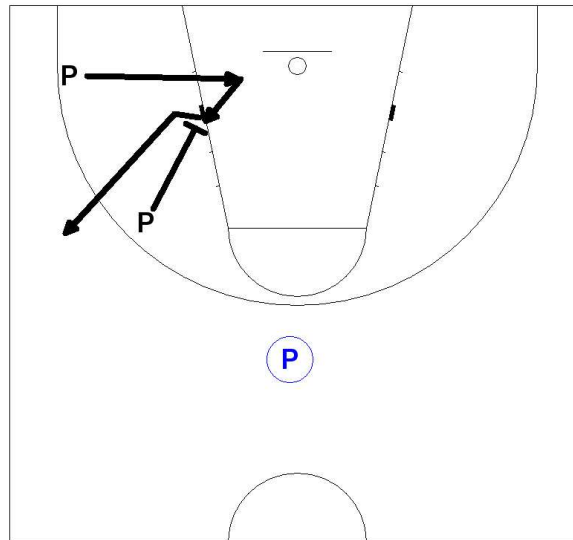
This technique, during the hesitation moment allows a clearer reading of the defense, but it is a useless choice if the offensive player is already far from and with a great advantage over his opponent.

How should the player being screened for behave? Everything depends on the behavior of the defense. If his defender gets screened off and the screener's defender does not switch, our player must stop behind the screen, catch the ball and shoot, while the screener moves to a good position for the rebound (**diagram 4**).
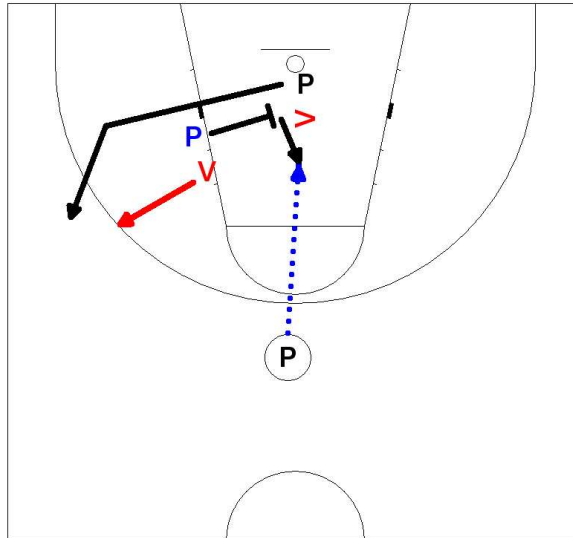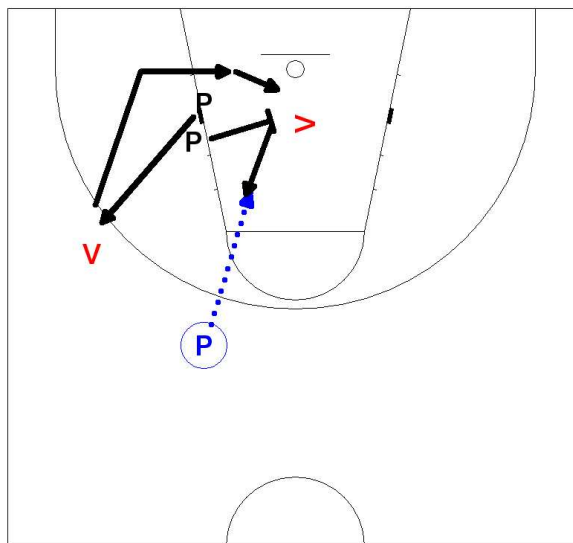

LESSON 12
SCREENS
DIAGRAM 04

SHOT

If there is a defensive switch, (**diagram 5**) we ask the player being screened for to spread out towards the three point line, to give some space to the screener to turn towards the ball, keeping an advantageous position over the defender who has been screened off.

LESSON 12
SCREENS
DIAGRAM 05

It is really important that the screened player, in the case of a defensive switch, does not stop, not to overcrowd an area on the court in which there are at least three offensive players and their respective defenders. If he spreads out towards the three point line, he has the possibility to make a back door cut in case the screener catches the ball (**diagram 6**).
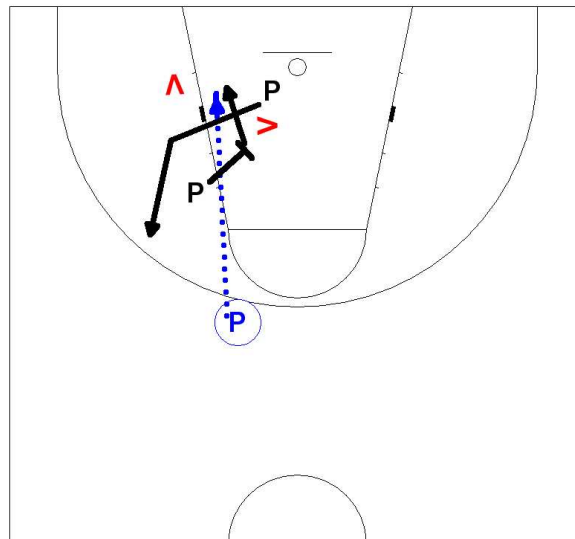
LESSON 12
SCREENS
DIAGRAM 06

If the defender of the player being screened for decides to "follow" him, we must teach the "curl" move, which is to turn around the screen to catch the ball or to give some space to the screener who, afterwards has stepped out (**diagram 7**).
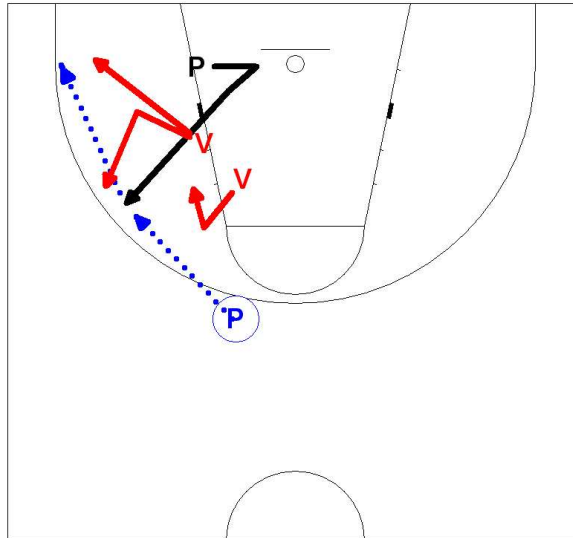
LESSON 12
SCREENS
DIAGRAM 07
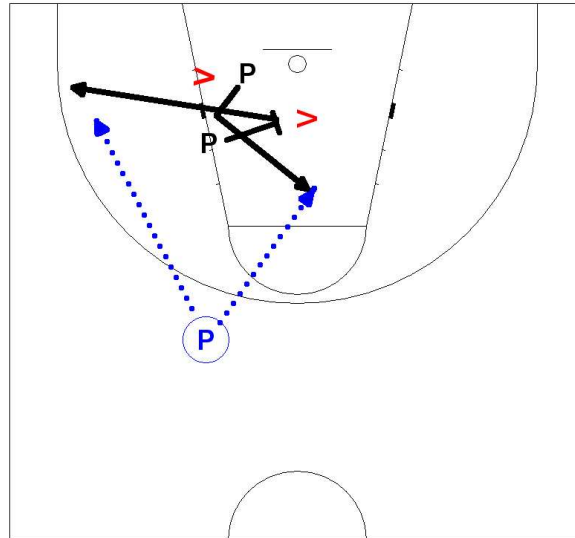
If the defense "runs after" the shooter, the payer should go to the top of the restricted area, allowing the screener to take a step towards the baseline to receive a lob pass (**diagram 8**) or a pass from the ball handler in the case that his own defender has faked the switch (**diagram 9**).

LESSON 12
SCREENS
DIAGRAM 08

In diagram 9 we notice that if the defense runs after the shooter, the screener changes the angle of the screen. Pivoting away from the shooter's defender (**diagram 10**) he takes a position that is perpendicular to his teammate. This way he has more space to make a curl and a quick step towards the baseline or towards the basket to receive a pass.

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DIAGRAM 10
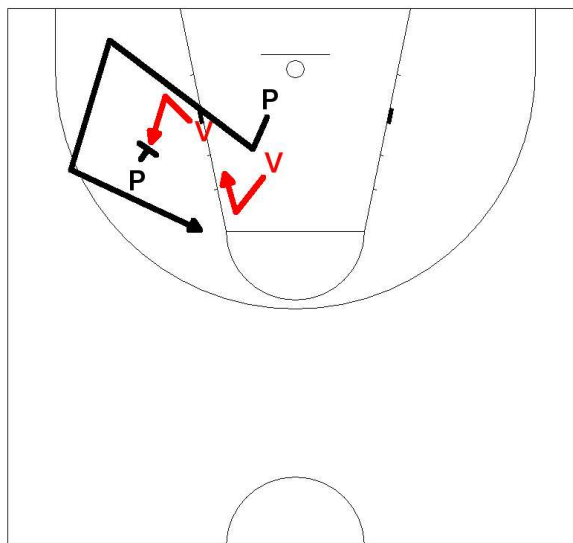
We might teach similar footwork to the screener when the shooter's defender decides to go over the screen or between the screener and the screener's defender. In this case we teach the shooter to stop a second behind the screen, then to step out to the corner, with his back to the corner and his feet already towards the basket while he is catching the ball.
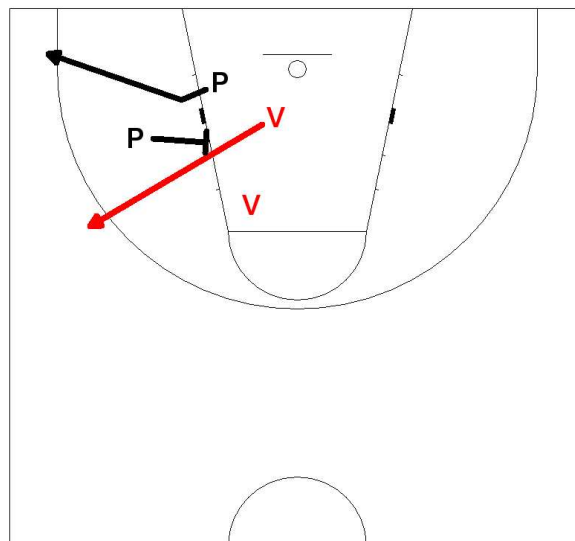
We insist a lot that the shooter does not receive the ball with his back to the baseline because in this case once he has the ball, he must face the basket before he shoots, allowing his defender to recover (**diagram 11**).
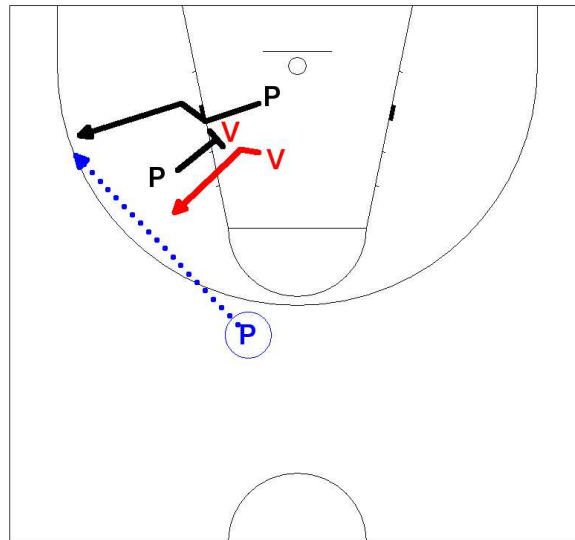
When the screener sees that his teammate stops behind him to go to the corner, he must change the screening angle pivoting away off his left foot (**diagram 12**). This way he is a greater obstacle to the defender, can offer a possible passing lane to his teammate with the ball, and only when the ball is in the corner will he try to roll to the basket to offer his teammate a new passing lane (**diagram 13**).
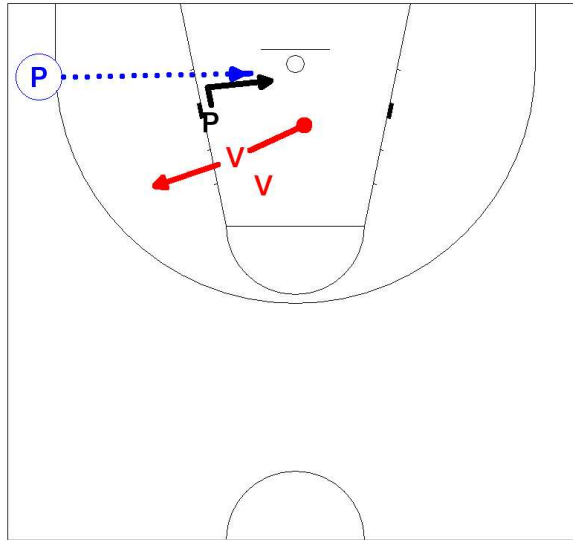
Using the screen it is very important to offer the player with the ball two possibilities to pass, but the position of the screen is much more important.

If the defender follows the shooter, this one and the teammate should try to set the screen as close as possible to the baseline, to give the player, who probably will make a curl inside the restricted area more space (**diagrams 14-15**). If the defender chooses to go "through" or "over" the screen, the action will be further away from the baseline to give the shooter enough space for a fade away movement (**diagrams 16-17**).
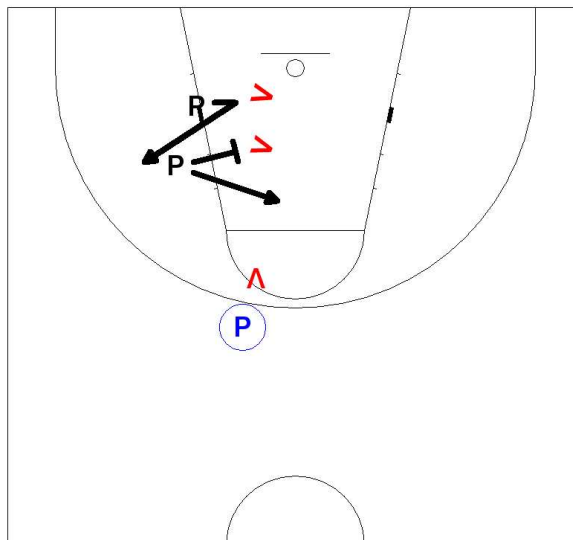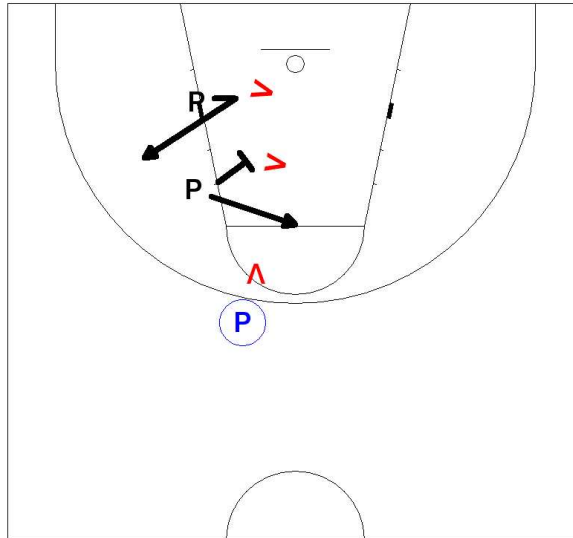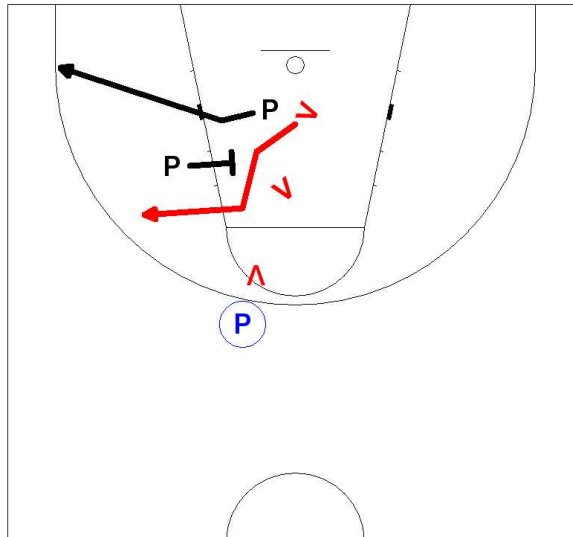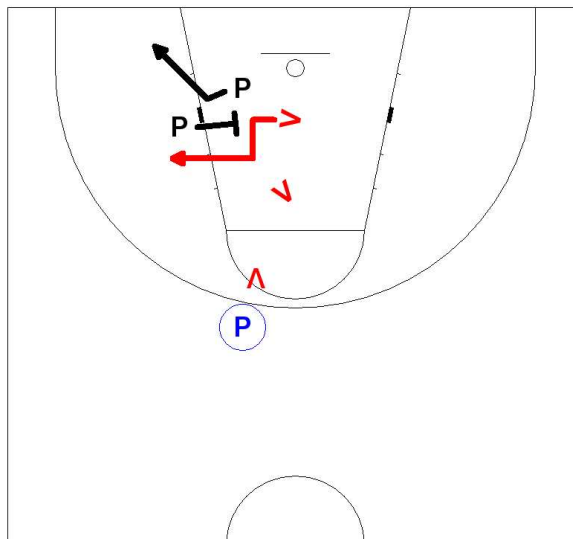
LESSON 12
SCREENS
DIAGRAM 15

YES

LESSON 12
SCREENS
DIAGRAM 16

YES

LESSON 12
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DIAGRAM 17

NO

To take the correct decision it is essential that the two offensive players read their opponent's defense, avoiding looking only at the teammate with the ball. One of the most important components of the game without the

ball, (unfortunately very neglected in all age groups), is to avoid looking too much at the ball, and to read the defense. The timely reading of the defense is very useful also for the player with the ball, to choose which kind of pass to execute.

In diagram 12 (fade movement of the shooter) the pass is a two handed (skip) pass over the head: this pass must start when the shooter is working to get open.

If the player with the ball begins the passing action when the shooter is already open, the ball will arrive late, allowing the defender's recovery. The secret of good execution is to move the ball quickly, while the teammate is finishing his cut. We use very simple drills to train our players to correctly read screening action.
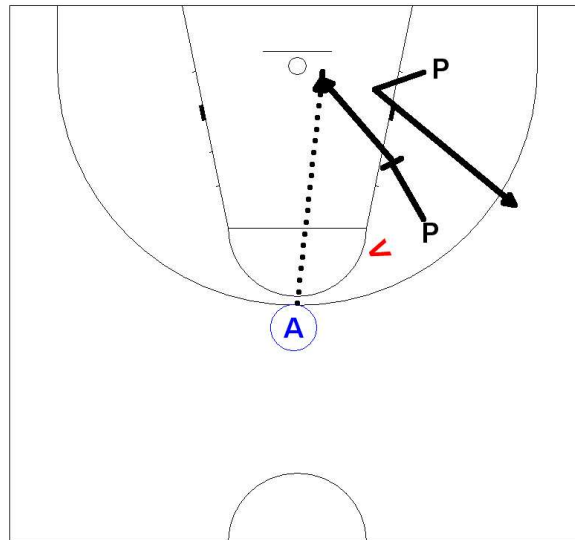
In **diagram 18**, there are two lines of players, a support and an assistant coach who has a clear defensive behavior when he is screened: he either stays close to the screen, goes over the screen or he follows the shooter.

LESSON 12
SCREENS
DIAGRAM 18
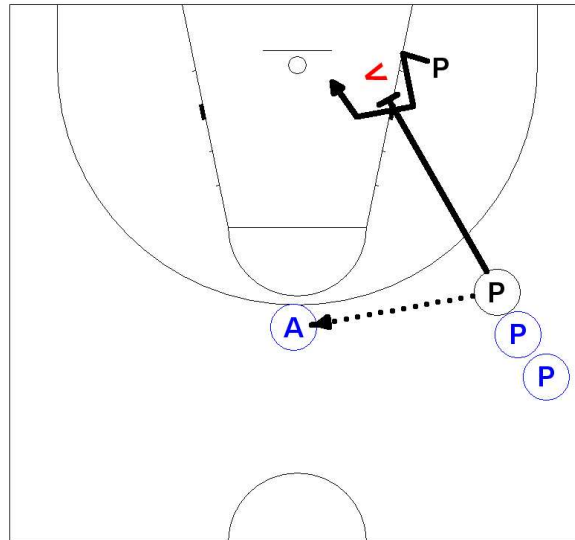
The support (who is always a player) must choose therefore the right pass to make to the shooter who, depending on the defense, will curl or fade. A similar drill must be done with a defender on the screener to stimulate the player being screened for, to pay attention to the other defenders and not to his own (**diagram 19**), the passer could also throw a lob pass to the screener, who goes to the basket if his defender helps too much on the shooter.

The teaching progression goes on with 2v2 and a support player who passes the ball, until we arrive to play 3v3. The methodology we have used for the vertical screen (the game for the screened player, for the screener, two passing lines for the passer) can be used for every kind of screen, allowing therefore a simplification of the didactics.

In case of a pass and "screen away" action the footwork of the player being screened for will be key again, and the behavior of the defense will dictate how the action should continue.

If the defender is screened off, our player should step out to shoot, or in the case of a defensive switch (**diagram 20**) leave room for the screener who will roll to the basket. If the defense runs after the shooter ("chases"), our player should curl with the screener who steps back to the ball (**diagram 21**).
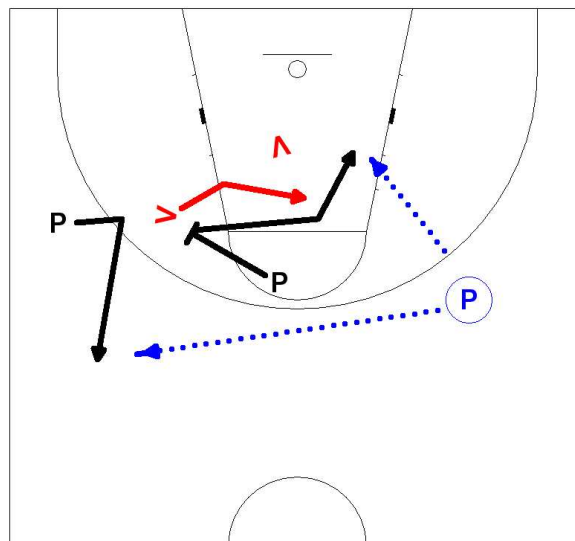
LESSON 12
SCREENS
DIAGRAM 20
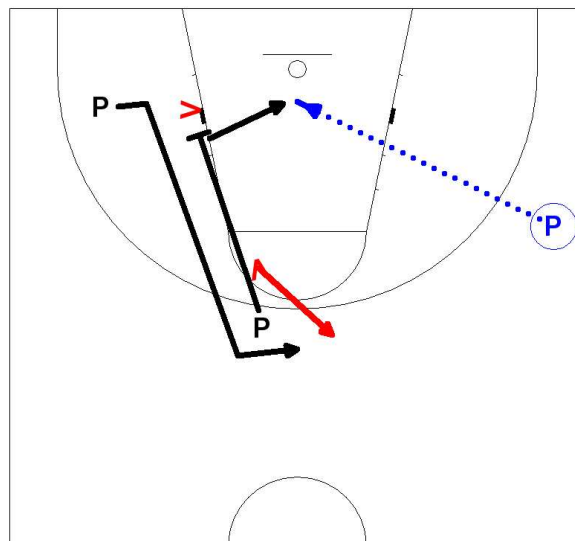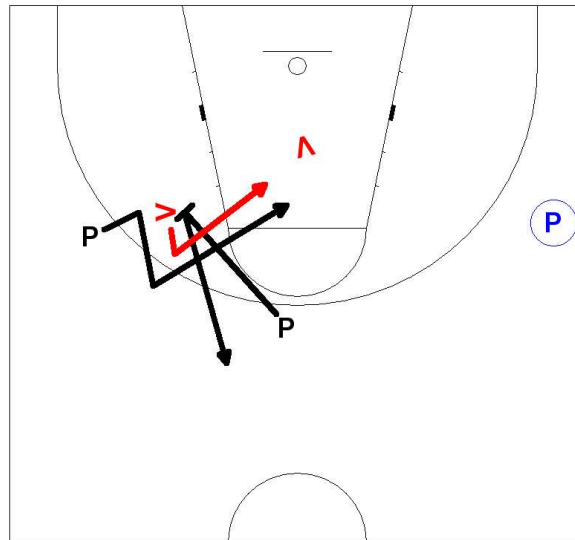
Finally, if the defender wants to go between his opponent and the screener, it will be suitable to fade with the screener rolling to the basket (**diagram 22**). In this case as well, the screener might change the screening angle to help the shooter coming off and fading away.
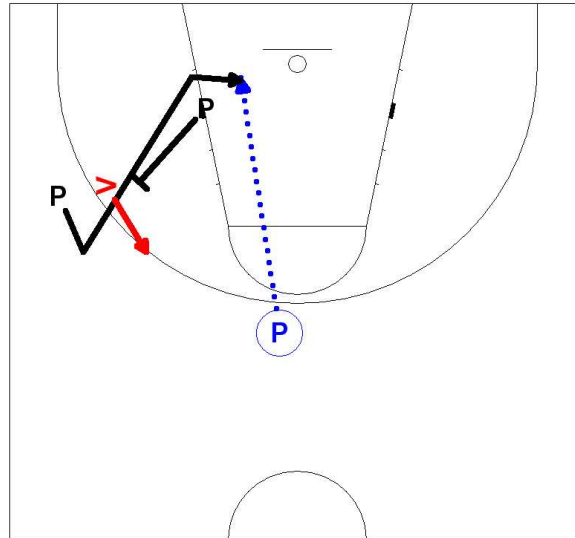
LESSON 12
SCREENS
DIAGRAM 22

The teaching progression with situations of 2v0, 2v1 (the defender on the screener or on the player being screened for), 2v2 always with a support who passes the ball, and finally 3v3 is similar to that we saw before.

Only in the case of a back screen must we take care of one detail. Differently from what happens in the other situations of a direct screen, the screened player will turn his first steps towards the ball, to provoke a greater defensive aggressiveness, and then he will change direction and speed, to go to the basket (**diagram 23**).

LESSON 12
SCREENS
DIAGRAM 23

This lesson has been dedicated to the teaching of screening without the ball, whilst pick & rolls will be addressed in another lesson. In the lesson dedicated to the tempo of the game and to spacing, I will analyze how the use of some screens rather than others influences the fluency of a team's game.

REMEMBER

- When we have set a screen we always want to give two passing lanes because often the screener will be open.

- When faced with a defensive switch the defense should be spread and the screener given space to turn and catch the ball.

- Does the defense "follow" or "chase"? In this situation we change the screening angle and curl.

- Does the defense go over the screen? In this situation we change the screening angle and fade.

- The player who has the ball has to look at the defenders of both of his teammates involved in the screening action, the player being screened for must read what his defender and the screener's defender do.