



THREE OF A KIND

Course 01: Coach Ettore Messina

Lesson 20: Zone Offense 2

Language: English

ZONE OFFENSE 2

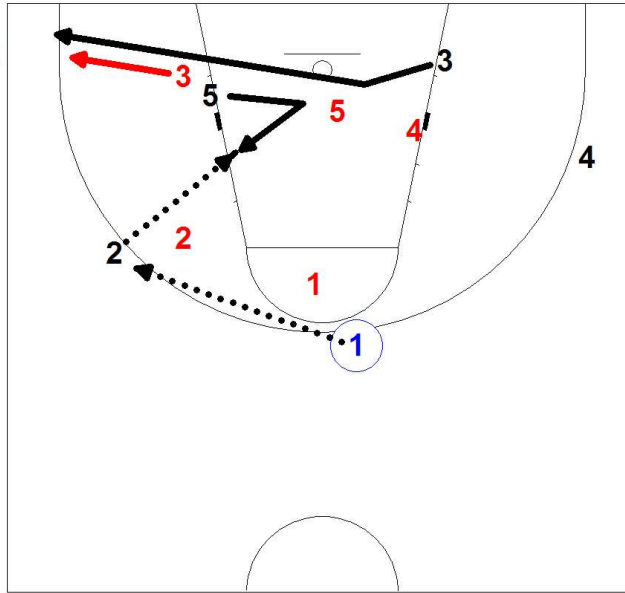
4. USE OF THE PASS

It is rare when attacking against a zone that a ball is passed out to an outside player who is being denied. Because of this it is important for the ball to arrive in a position where he can rapidly shoot. As opposed to when playing against a man defense the goal will be to pass the ball to the shooting hand, and not that which is furthest away from the defender.

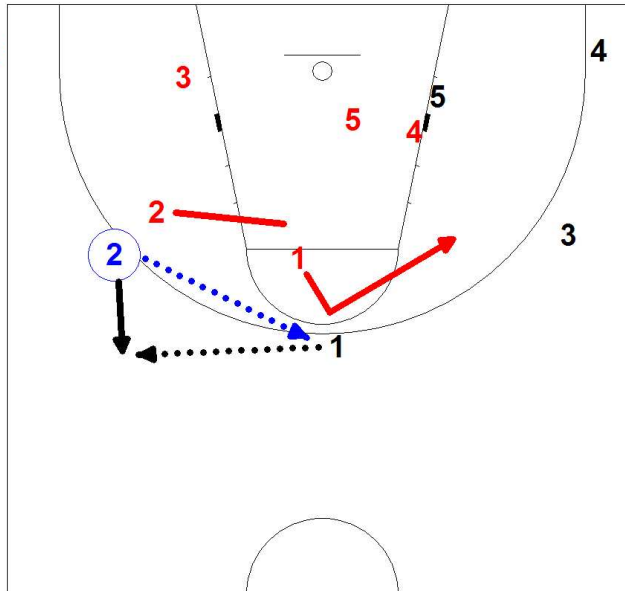
This detail improves the quality of execution of our offense and allows us to shoot the ball quicker or at least be a threat, often drawing the attention of one or more defenders who have gone for the fake.

As well as a shot fake the pass fake is a very useful technique in order to move the defense and create better passing angles. In **diagram 21** O2 can pass fake to O3 in the corner, causing X4 to come out just enough for a pass into O5 to be available. Often faking a pass towards one side can move the defense in a way that a return pass can be made for an uncontested shot (**diagram 22**).

LESSON 19
ZONE OFFENSE
DIAGRAM 21

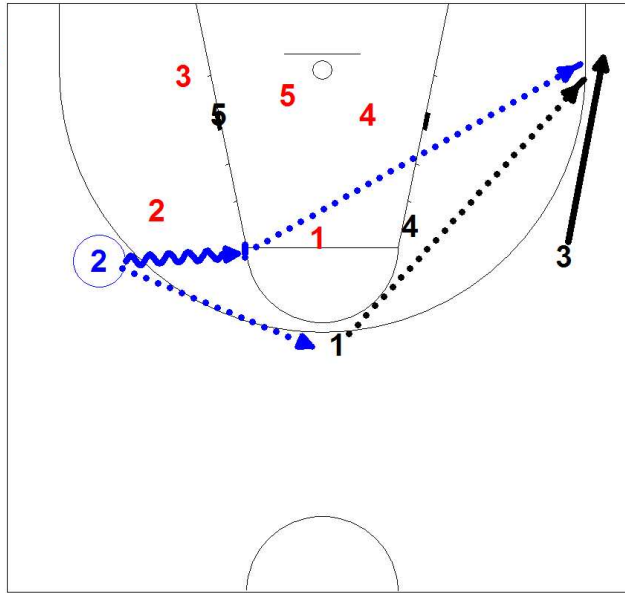


LESSON 19
ZONE OFFENSE
DIAGRAM 22

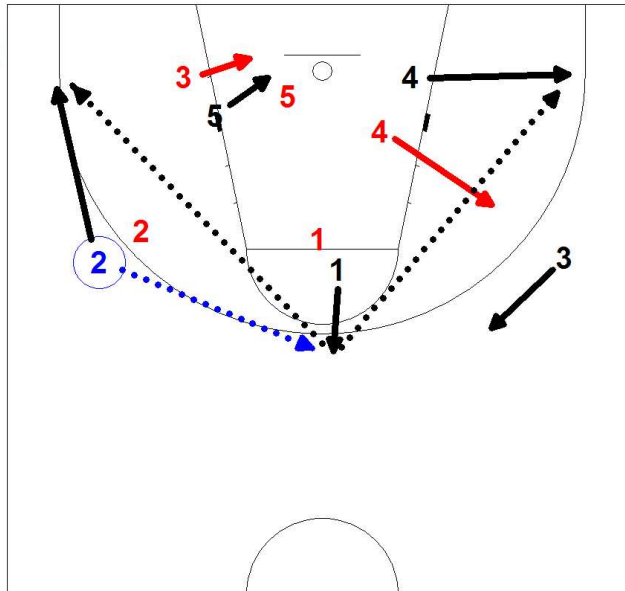


Another technique which is very effective against a zone is the diagonal pass looking for the shooter on the help side. Often players defending in a zone have their back to the help side corner (**diagram 23**). If a shooter positions himself in the corner he can be found using a skip pass either from the top of the restricted area or from the wing position. The same can also be done from the high post (**diagram 24**) or as is the case against a man defense from the low post.

LESSON 19
ZONE OFFENSE
DIAGRAM 23

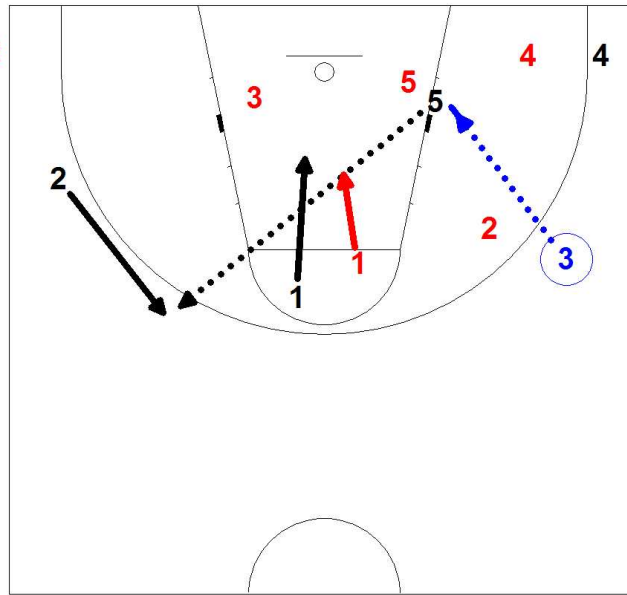


LESSON 19
ZONE OFFENSE
DIAGRAM 24



In **diagram 25** one of the most effective ways to beat a zone is illustrated: the ball is passed into the low post, the high post makes a deep basket cut and has to be followed by one of the defenders, after a fake pass to the cutter the shooter on the help side wing is wide open.

LESSON 19
ZONE OFFENSE
DIAGRAM 25



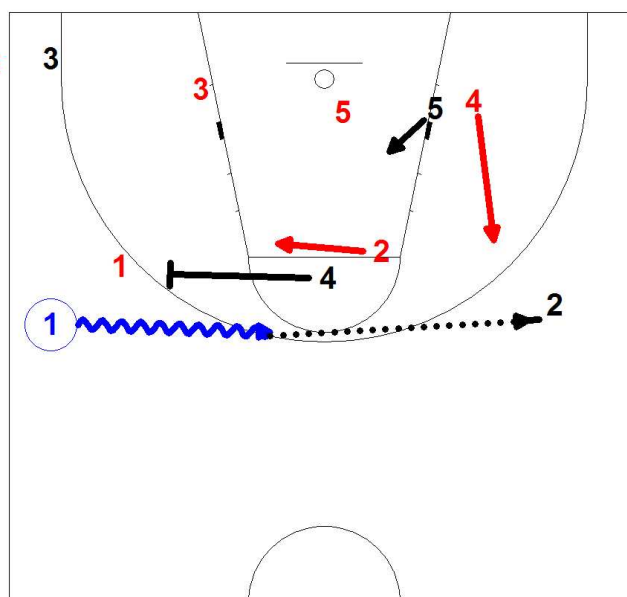
The use of the diagonal pass allows the offense to “jump” at least one defensive position, forcing the opponents to recover in a way that they rarely are able to contest the outside shot or a dribble penetration.

5. USING SCREENS

The ball screen is usually set on the first line of defense to immediately free up a shot for the ball handler or to condition the defense so that a teammate can take advantage.

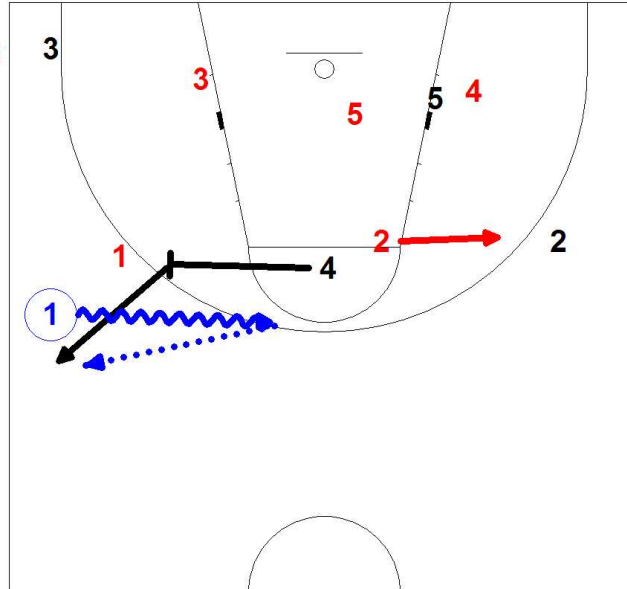
It is possible to set a side screen for a player coming towards the middle (**diagram 26**) in order to create middle dribble penetration or to force the defense to collapse in the restricted area and freeing up a shooter on the help side.

LESSON 19
ZONE OFFENSE
DIAGRAM 26



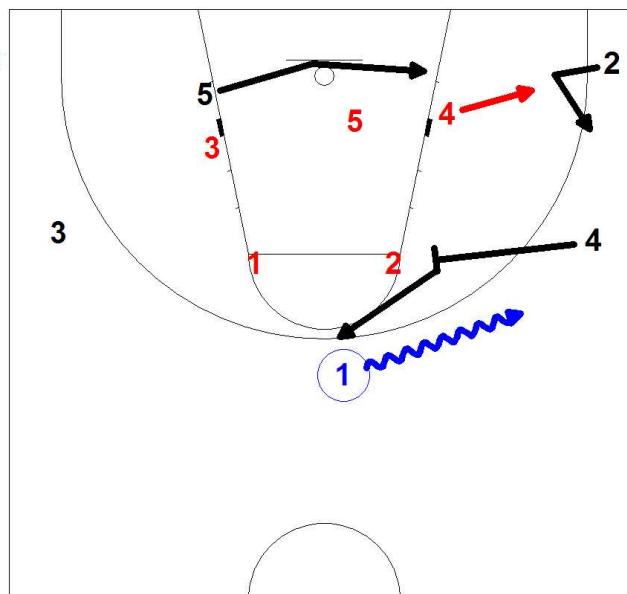
If X1 tries to go underneath the screen, he risks allowing an outside shot, or O4 can pop out after having set the screen and receive a return pass (**diagram 27**). This is amongst others, the reason for which many coaches have a shooter set the screen, someone who is usually a little shorter than the screener against a man defense.

LESSON 19
ZONE OFFENSE
DIAGRAM 27



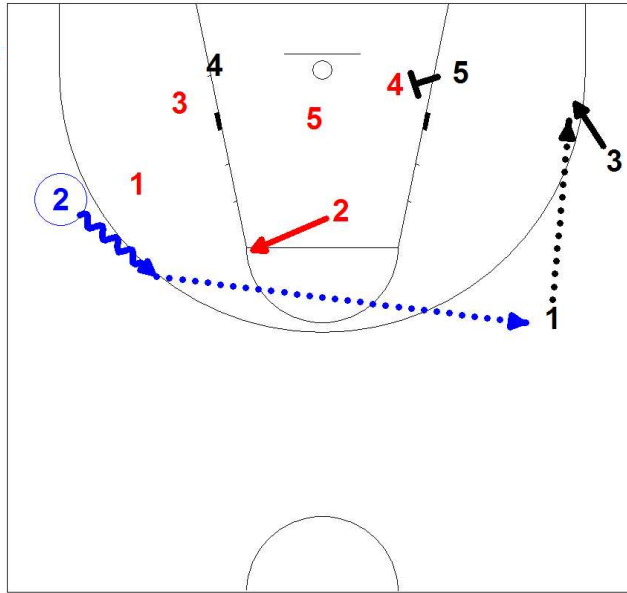
Another effective action is to set a screen that allows an outside player to become open. In **diagram 28** O4 sets a screen that creates doubt in the mind of X3 over who to cover.

LESSON 19
ZONE OFFENSE
DIAGRAM 28



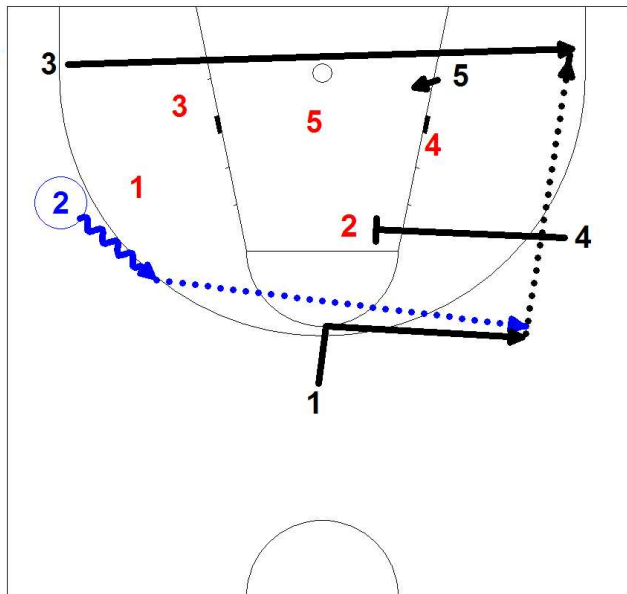
This type of screen defined as a "containment" screen is very effective also when set for a player without the ball. A typical situation is illustrated in **diagram 29** where the ball is located on the wing. With a rapid ball reversal O5 with his screen prevents X4 from coming out to contest O3's shot.

LESSON 19
ZONE OFFENSE
DIAGRAM 29



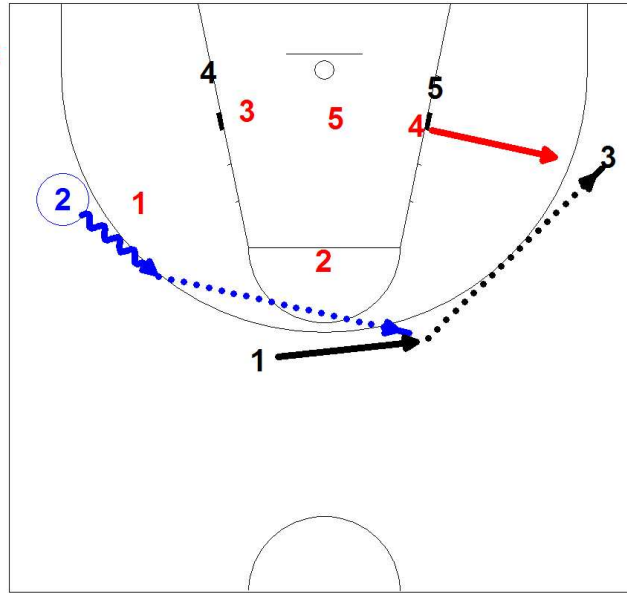
This containment screen can also be set on the first line of the defense as seen in **diagram 30**.

LESSON 19
ZONE OFFENSE
DIAGRAM 30



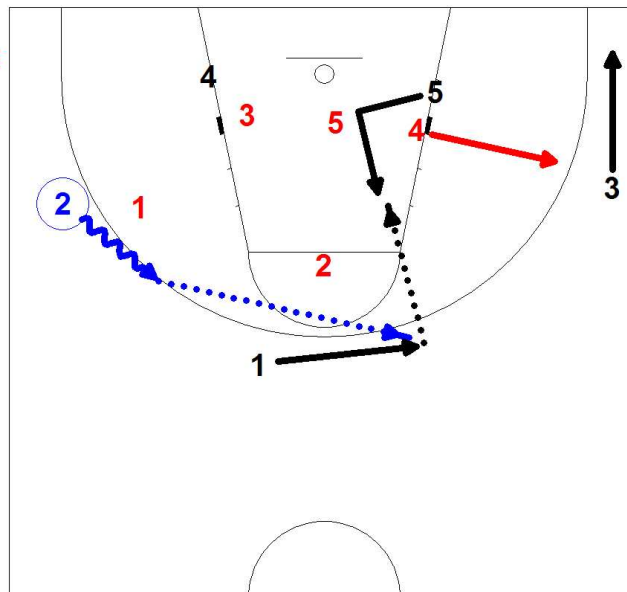
If the screen is set near the baseline then a technical detail should be emphasized. If the outside defender goes over the screen (**diagram 31**) we do not want our offensive player setting the screen to make any mistakes and be concentrated purely on preventing the defender to contest the shot.

LESSON 19
ZONE OFFENSE
DIAGRAM 31



We would prefer to allow the defender to come outside if the screener can gain a good position inside the restricted area and then receive a pass close to the basket (**diagram 32**). In this case a pass fake from O1 to O3 can cause the distance between the defenders to increase and improve the likelihood of making an inside pass to O5. Once again the correct use of the individual fundamentals with or without the ball allows us to maintain the initiative against the defense.

LESSON 19
ZONE OFFENSE
DIAGRAM 32



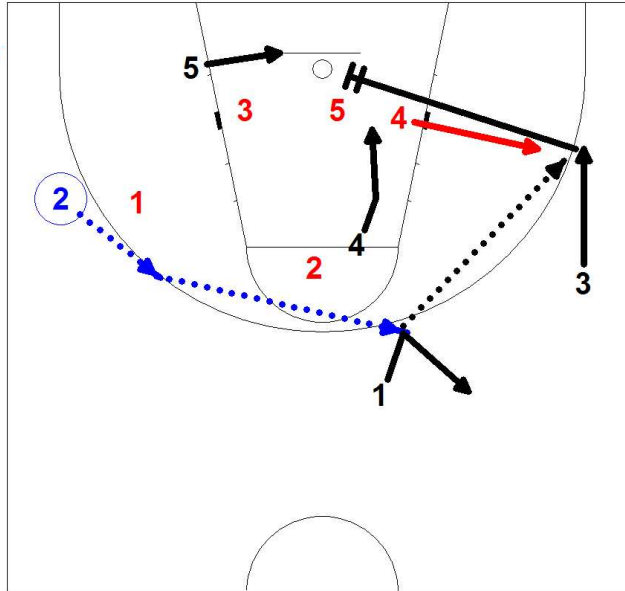
6. OFFENSIVE REBOUNDS

The search for new possessions or whenever possible of high percentage shots is even more important against a zone defense for two reasons. First because against a zone more shots are taken from the outside and knowing that more players are going after the offensive rebound allows the shooter to be more comfortable when shooting. Also, due to players not having

individual blocking out responsibilities smaller players often find themselves having to block out taller players, with the obvious risk associated.

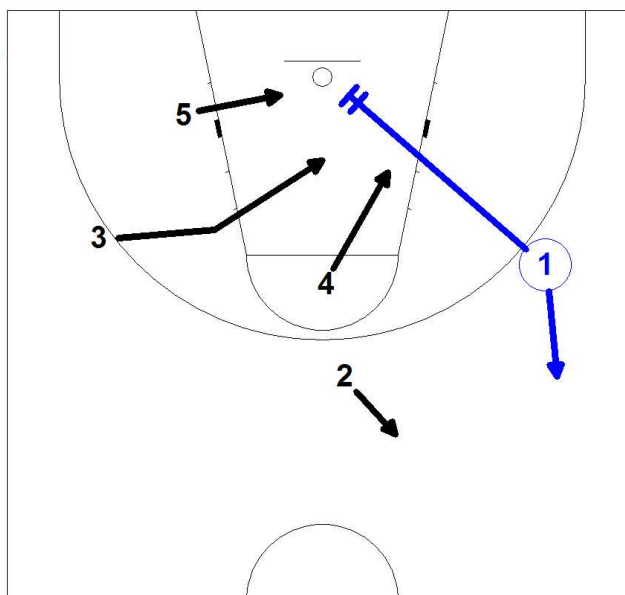
Diagram 33 illustrates this as after O1 has shot the ball, outside players are trying to prevent the taller and stronger O4 from rebounding the basketball.

LESSON 19
ZONE OFFENSE
DIAGRAM 33



Many teams will send the forward on the help side to crash the offensive boards (**diagram 34**) leaving the shooter and the defensive safety to organize the defensive transition. If on the one hand it is important to ensure good defensive coverage in transition, on the other hand the advantage that can be gained when crashing the boards should not be forgotten. Based on the makeup of our players and the offense chosen we can decided how many players we will send to the offensive glass.

LESSON 19
ZONE OFFENSE
DIAGRAM 34



REMEMBER

- Using the fastbreak against a zone is vital to find high percentage shots before the defense has set
- Inside and outside players must maintain good spacing in order to prevent a defender from covering two players at the same time
- The dribble and the pass must be used taking into consideration the characteristics of the zone defense with the goal of breaking down the defenders and creating an advantage for the offense
- Screens can also create shooting opportunities against a zone defense whether set against the first or second line
- Aggressiveness when going after the offensive rebound is vital against a zone defense because there are no individual blocking out responsibilities