



Credit

As I have been busy over the past months starting my own player development and basketball training business, I have been watching a lot of film to prepare and construct my workout curriculum. As I was studying and watching film of some of the best NBA point guards, I found that they pass the ball in pick and roll 67% of the time, leaving only 33% of the other possessions to be scoring opportunities. This number caused me to pause for a brief moment and consider whether or not the time that I spend teaching pick and roll solutions matches up with the frequency that certain actions happen. Dick Bennet is famous for saying "be good at the things that happen the most", and I believe that quote needs to be one of the foundational principles of any player development strategy.

One of the main ideas behind ball screen offense is to gain a numbers advantage over the

defense. Most defensive coverages involve 2 defenders on the ball for a certain amount of time around the ball screen, leaving the help defenders to play 3 on 4. The great point guards are those that can slow down off a ball screen, keep 2 men guarding them, and then deliver a pass that is on-time and on-target.

Passing Situations:

- The first passing option is simply to pass the ball to a rolling screen if no help defender has rotated over to tag them as they roll to the rim.
- The second option is to pass to a popping screener if the help defense has not yet rotated over.
- The third option is to pass the ball to a teammate that is on the ball side of the play as their defender stunts at the dribbler in an attempt to stop a drive.
- The fourth and final option is to throw the ball back to a player on the weakside that is now open because their man left to rotate and cover the roll man.

The Passing Solutions: Rolling Screener

- **Wrap Pass**
 - This pass is performed when the defense is showing on the ball screen in such a way that the chest of the hedge man is pointed towards the opposite basket. Many people refer to this as a soft hedge or flat coverage. As the ball handler comes off the pick and roll, they will attack the outside hip of the show man, take one hard dribble, and fire a one-handed pass by the outside hip of the roll man to the rolling screener.
- **Pocket Pass**
 - This is one of the most common passes that occurs in pick and roll situations. This pass can be thrown against almost any defensive coverage. As the ball handler comes off the screen, they will have their chin on their inside shoulder, surveying the floor. If there is a gap between the hedging post player and the recovering guard, the ball handler will pass the ball off the dribble through that gap to the rolling screener. This can be thrown with either hand, depending on the scenario.
- **Step-Through**
 - This pass is performed when the hedging defender has jammed up the ball handler and there is no good angle to pass the ball. The ball handler will attack the outside shoulder of the hedge defender to slide them uphill a bit, pick their dribble up and pivot on their inside foot, swinging their outside foot towards the rim, creating an angle to pass the ball.
- **Advance Pass**
 - If the screeners defender hedges hard, the ball handler can throw the ball ahead to another offensive player directly of their first or second dribble. Once the player off the ball receives the advance pass, they will quickly throw it to the rolling screener. This is advantageous because the man who is now receiving the pass has a much better passing angle. Another advantage to this pass is the quickness of the action.

The Passing Solutions: Popping Screener

- **Bounce Back Pass**
 - As the ball handler clears the screener, they will attack with 2 dribbles. In order to create a passing angle back to the popping screener, the guard will jab with their inside foot and push uphill on their second dribble. This action is similar to a step-back jump shot. Once the ball handler has bounced back uphill, they will then reverse pivot and fire a pass to the popping screener.
- **Hook Pass**
 - This is one of the most common passes being used in the NBA today. As the ball handler clears the ball screen and attacks with the dribble, they will take one hard pound dribble and then pass the ball over head with one hand in a hook motion.