

Michael Czepil
Trends & Observations from Europe
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HumxhGf4t9s&t=1337s>

- Spoke about Australia U19 and their experience at Albert Schweitzer tournament in Germany.
- 3 day camp as preparation, big part of this was how they were going to deal with half-court actions in Europe. Most common thing in Europe is playing in the middle third of the court, with a slower paced game picking apart the defense with precise actions.
- Second thing is having to be very diligent with on-ball actions.
- Australia used a FC 1-2-2 press of dead balls and made free-throw. Trapped a little bit out of it, but main aim was to pin ball to sideline and keep out of the middle third and out of the traditional ball handler's hands. This effected organisation of the rest of the offense if it wasn't with the primary ball handler.
- If ball got to the wing in the 1-2-2, would then match-up and go into man or 2-3 zone.
- Used the word sideline pin a lot which meant 'influencing' on the hip towards baseline. Avoided having this as a 'force' however as this gives up straight line drive. They were reminding players of it from the bench as it was big in keeping the ball out of the central corridor, preventing teams running their offences from the middle.
- Pick & Pop post in Europe is very important. In European sets, very frequent to have the 4 defender have to close out to the stretch 4 in the trail spot. This has to be considered in the defensive plan.
- Seam and mid pick & roll preferred over wing pick and roll. Out of 100 possessions, approx 40 P&R in seams vs wings.
- In Pick & Pop coverage, would help from the nail. If the pop player was a shooting threat (+40%), it would be a non-negotiable for Australia to help off the nail. They would X-Out with the weak-side wing help player on the nail closing out to the pop player, and then the corner or weak side post defender taking the wing player.
- If a non-shooting threat, would be drop coverage. Drop would recover as normal after the on-ball defender chases over the top. Australia call their ball screen drop coverage 'mush.'
- On a sideline screen and roll, it's a bad angle for the screener's defender to close-out if the screener pops to the corner. Also a very long close-out for teams that hedge/ show. Australia hedge sideline screens, but then had the weak side help in the 'captain' spot (smile) X out to cover the pop action. The player helping here has to be active 'hunting it out,' and close-out as soon as pass to the pop looks like it will happen. This could be a 1 or 2 defender closing out on a 5 but doesn't matter.
- Europeans genuinely don't like playing off the bounce. Worth having this on mind when considering close-outs.
- Australia never said the words 'under the ball screen' or 'close-out short'! Like-wise, if there was a great close-out but dropped the hands, it would be a shot. Cue would be 'high-hand early' to take away the rhythm shot and then 'carrying a hand' = putting the hand above the ball the whole time. If you don't have the hand above the ball, they will raise up and shoot it.

- With CoE (Centre of Excellence), the kids in the program represent the National Team. This aids National Team performance but also shows how the kids are in a great DTE (daily training environment).
- Pindown into a step-up seam ball screen was the most common action in the tournament. Would also do this same action out of a stagger (on-ball screen with second stagger screen player).
- A nice development from this action was a boomerang off the pindown instead of using the ball screen, then flare, pass to screener stepping up, flip and follow (chase) to player coming off the flare, finishing with sideline screen and roll. This multi-action sequences are extremely tough to guard. Nice twinkles to teach based on whether advantage has been created or not (are there dominoes?).
- Europeans are great playing with '4 point' spacing. Even if athleticism isn't US levels, this spacing helps let them create split opportunities as combined with basketball IQ, it's very hard to guard.
- Israeli teams ran multiple slips on ball-screens. What was different however was that while the player was slipping (to the basket or popping to the perimeter) they would immediately go into another action (e.g. another pin down or ball screen). Very difficult to guard.
- During the film study, they would chart how many times they didn't have a hand-up on the close-out (carrying the hand). Important to have some 'go-to' categories to stat for video breakdown.
- Concept shooting = shooting the team did during practice or shoot-around out of the actions they used in games (punch, pop, post entry etc).
- Practice schedule was the same during the tournament. 3/4 mins of passing & dribbling, shooting, warm-up with physio, then preparing for the scout.
- Taking away 'rhythm' shots is extremely important when playing against European National Teams.
- They took stats of guys that avoided screens and those that got 'hung-up' on screens (on and off-ball).
- "Once you instil it, then you can demand it."
- The team struggled a lot with turnovers in early games from footwork on not getting the ball down early enough on the lead-step or cross-step. Solution was working on the throw-down dribble for both lead and cross-step (throwing ball down first before taking a step). Can do this off self-toss and box drills during warm-ups. Do from post as well as perimeter.
- Australia use Aaron Fearne's 'tagging up' system. It helped them a lot as they got 27+ offensive rebounds per game sometimes.

'Australia Shooting'

- Something the National Team did pre warm-up at practice. Also nice for pre-game warm-up.
- Australia receiver principles are to have the drift and diagonal being filled.
 - KPI = stepping across and over-top rips on passes. Left-hand, outside the body.
 - KPI = throw-down dribble on the dribble split.
 - KPI = two-footed landing on pass (though this could vary, could also work on baseline drift)
- Extra pass is thrown from the drift to the diagonal.
- N.B - we can do differently providing an either-or decision. 2 could decide to safety-valve and follow the 3's drive. In this case, 3 could stop and pass to safety valve. Otherwise, if 2 fills the diagonal, 1 makes the extra pass. Coach can throw second ball in so 1 gets a shot after the extra.
- Other ideas for loading are to have the coach act as a guided defender, so kick player has to read whether to pass to drift or diagonal spot. Next progression from here can be playing with a live defender, so it's 2v1 shooting with two passes to get a 'ROB' shot.

