

Ross McMains - New York Knicks NBA London Clinic

Transition Concepts

- It's important before you talk about your offense to talk about your habits in key areas. For instance, what are the reactions to every ball screen coverage.
- These concepts and habits are the foundations and come before the sets.
- Ross' definition of offense = 5 players on the floor working together to create one advantage. At the point of which that advantage is created, those players need to use it to create one great shot for the group.
- First place to search for this advantage is in transition. Ross uses the word 'lag free' when talking about transition, i.e. the spinning wheel of death on the laptop. This is a nice analogy to describe what we sometimes see with players stalling in transition.
- The moment the Knicks gain possession of the ball, they want all 5 players sprinting.
- References a game vs Phoenix where as soon as the ball changed possession, all 5 guys were already mid-stride changing direction.
- The textbook definition of lag free is transitioning from one action to the next seamlessly.
- Three rules in transition for the Knicks:
 1. Sprint
 2. Flatten the floor for the ball handler (continue to corners if empty)
 3. Stay with Spacing. Spacing you sprint with is what you play with.
- A lot of teams want to have both corners filled every time in transition. Means if you have 3 players rebound on the same side of the floor, one player will often sprint across the floor which reduces space for the ball handler. 'We don't want traffic in the free-way.'
- We want to create 'a clear map of the floor' for the ball handler the moment they get the ball in transition.
- Knicks don't want the traditional trail spot filled in transition because it means their defender can sit in the gap and take away space from the ball handler. Linked into double gap/ wide offense ideas. Once there isn't an advantage, can then fill that trail spot after if it's part of your offense.
- If big is in front of the ball, they wait front of the rim (empty ahead) or can go into pistol action. If big is behind the ball (empty spread), they are level with the ball handler (don't want to be in front of the ball). "Stay with your spacing." If the trail's defender has already loaded back, should stretch floor out to maintain possibility of seeking advantage.
- If 3 players are same side of the floor, another reason don't want to bring one player across is in case big has a good seal position. This would mean you're bringing another defender into the action to disrupt this potential post entry. Solution is just to form the three side, making sure one can't guard two.
- Knicks call the 'gets' pistol actions.
- "Give our ball handler a clear picture."
- Rugby Coach at University of Cal. "If it's something you value it's something you should stat."
- Knicks stat first three steps in transition and try and get creative with what they look at. Ideas of what they track:
 1. Plus or Minus for whether player's first three steps were explosive or slow
 2. Five players over-court by 20 secs left on the shot clock.
 3. Paint touch by 17 seconds on clock. Means we probably don't need a set.
 4. Charting time it takes for ball to get to the outlet after going through the net on a score. If you want to get good at this, have to get closest person to inbound versus always having a 4 or 5 as designated inbounders.
 5. 'Bolt stats.' How often do players actually get in an actual sprint during the game? A bolt depends on the players. For instance, if the bigs can get over 21mph for 60ft or more (three quarters of the court) that registers as a 'bolt.' Pascal Siakam was number 1 in the NBA getting 17 bolts a game (offense and defense combined). NBA are really tracking the ability to get our in transition now.

- **3v3 'Army' Transition** = Defender of player who receives the ball has to touch the baseline. Temporary 3v2 advantage which offense try to exploit.
- Load = on the way up offense can't dribble.
- Load = shot clock / time limit for transition back
- Load = specify the actions
- Three scenarios in transition:
 1. Defense matched up numbers (may need to run an action to create an advantage)
 2. Defenders are mismatched (big vs small could be an advantage, especially if on the post entry the big draws).
 3. Offense has numerical advantage, in this case we play and use the advantage!
- The bench players yelled out mismatch during the 3v3 Army Drill. This was a great example of how players can stay active in a practice session when not on the court, and also what we want players to do when playing to recognise the above three transition scenarios.
- Ross thinks if you can get NBA players to invest in ball movement and quality passes, you'll get huge wins.
- "Passing is vision, decision and precision." These are the three parts of passing. Idea = good way to hot review passes.
- Ross uses the word 'dominoes' to talk about advantage. A nice analogy for younger kids to understand the concept of playing with advantage.
- Dominoes is the moment an advantage is created (open space, close-out, mismatch, anytime defense is in rotation etc), and how we can continue to run actions/ make decisions to make the dominoes fall.
- "How do we get into dominoes every possession of this game?" This can be done through the following:
 1. A system (e.g. Warriors and their split cuts)
 2. Through personnel (e.g. LeBron getting the ball in the midpost almost always draws 2),
 3. Opponent coverages (e.g. Trail Blazers, teams blitzing Dame Lillard is an opportunity to create dominoes). This is part of the game plan.
 4. Opponent's personnel (a player bad enough on the other team who you can take advantage of).
- Each game they're looking at where they can create dominoes. Biggest challenge is getting all 5 guys on the floor to recognise the moment the dominoes are engaged. E.g. big not reading a close-out drive and going to set a ball screen when instead he should be ready for the drive and potential kick.
- Utah Jazz are really good at understanding these above concepts. With ball screens, when they hear another team icing, they're really good skipping the ball to create a small close-out and dominoes situation.
- If a corner guy is not in a defensive position and wipes their shoe, player can ghost cut and create the dominoes. Try to find small nuances like this, and train players to seek these out to trigger advantages. This is the most meaningful thing they can find on offense.
- Three rules with dominoes:
 1. Ball can't stop (0.5 sec Spurs rule). Analogy with dominoes is when you spend a long time creating them, but one domino isn't spaced right and the flow chain is interrupted. This is the equivalent of freezing the ball, catching and jab stepping etc.
 2. One defender can't guard two offensive players. In context with a two side, have to stretch out and lift so one defender can't guard the players at the wing and corner (a decent athlete can do this). On the lift can turn it into a 'roadrunner' action. Player starts lifting and then cuts aggressively to the basket.
 3. Get into space, then out of space. Steph Curry is very good at this. Engages defense then fires it out. After a drive, can't hang around in the paint as it eats up the space. This is one of the main way the Warriors get their shots. On exits, Warriors pin in (sometimes screen teammates' defender or screen their own vs sw
- **3v0 Pen & Kick.** Example of a Phrase A drill which still has decisions. Good for warm-ups. People waiting can be passers, give balls to other two players that don't get a shot. Can load in one guided defender or live defender for 3v1.

- Sliding alone isn't fast enough to stop one defender guarding two. Have to cross-step (sprint first step) and then get chest to the ball.