



by Kevin Sutton

PLAYER AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT: THE PERIMETER

Kevin Sutton is the head coach of Montverde Academy in Florida, one of the top high schools in US. He has over twenty years of coaching experience, as assistant coach at James Madison University and Old Dominion University. He has built his reputation as an excellent teacher of the fundamentals and he is a regular lecturer at the Nike Skills Academy and Five-Star, the two top US summer basketball camps. He has produced two DVDs, "30 Drills for Building a Complete Guard" and "30 Drills for Building a Complete Post Player" (Championship Productions).

INTRODUCTION

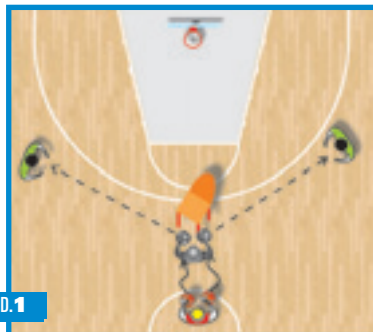
Since 1986 when the NCAA introduced and adopted the three point line into the college game, the definition of perimeter and post became more define. Inside the arc is the post area and outside of the arc is the perimeter area. The line enabled coaches and players to have a better understanding of spacing. Interestingly enough twenty years later, there is talk of moving the line back to the international distance. The battle lines have been drawn (in an arc form), I might add. Some coaches are for it, and some coaches oppose the change. I am of the opinion that what has been missing in the game of basketball is the "midrange game". The midrange game is vital to the success of a good perimeter player's game. I feel that the midrange game adds balance to the game. Too often perimeter players are labeled as:

- 1) slashers - guys, who attack the basket, or
- 2) standstill shooters - guys, who can only catch and shoot the ball. That is why I have placed a high premium on teaching my players the midrange game.

In this article, I want to share with you these two objectives:

- 1) My philosophy on what makes a successful perimeter player, and
- 2) Workout drills I use to develop perimeter players.

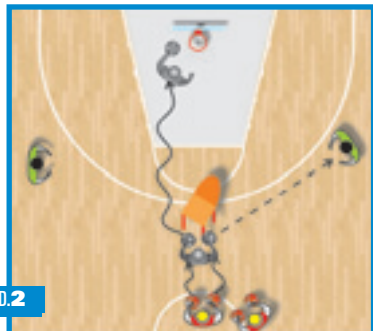




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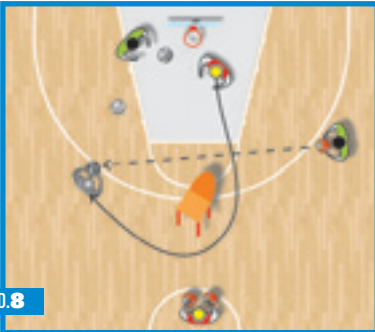
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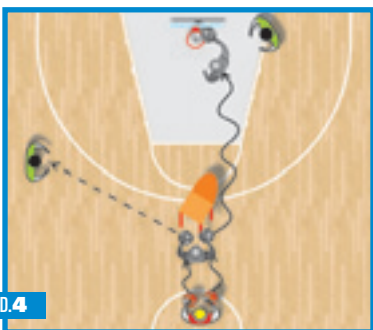
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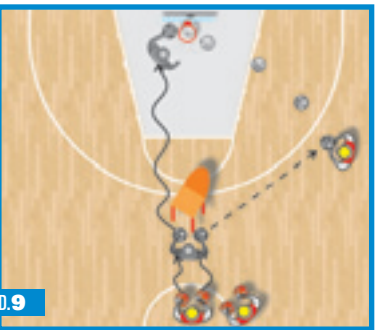
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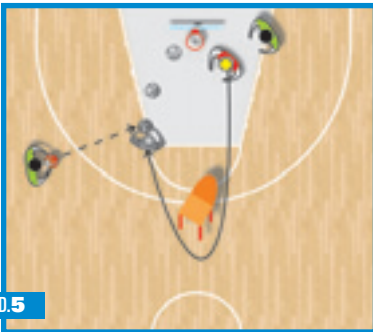
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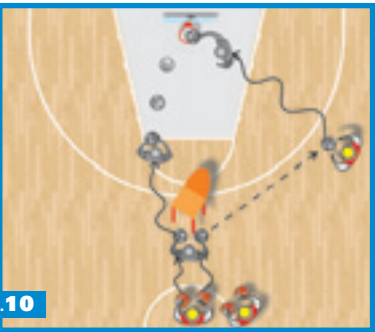
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MY PHILOSOPHY ON WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A SUCCESSFUL PERIMETER PLAYER

By definition, perimeter mean: outside or around a designated area. Well, in the game of basketball, the perimeter is the area beyond the three point line that is around the post area or paint. So what does it take to be a successful perimeter player?

a) Understanding of the Game

1. Spacing
2. How to move without the ball (Ray Allen, Richard Hamilton, of the NBA)
3. Shot selection (good shots = high percentage; bad shot = low percentage)
4. Making right decisions (time & score, when to pass/when to shoot).

b) Ball Handling/Dribbling Skills

1. Fundamental knowledge of how to execute and effectively use the following dribble moves: crossover, spin, between the legs, pound, around the back, below the butt
2. Understanding of open full court dribbling vs. half court guarded dribbling.

c) Passing Skills

1. Fundamental knowledge of how to execute and effectively use the following passes: chest, bounce, overhead/ outlet, one hand push, around the back
2. How to and when to the feed the post.

d) Footwork Skills

1. Must always be on balance
2. Effective use of different types of pivots: front, reverse, jab series
3. Triple threat position/ attack game (pass/dribble/ shoot).

e) Shooting Ability Skills

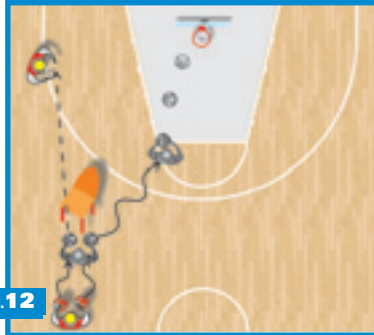
1. Catch and shoot
2. Ability to create own shot (mid range game)
3. Use of ball screens
4. Drive game scoring different ways (floater, score off wrong leg)
5. Free-throw game (the result of an effective drive game)

I also believe that the truly great perimeter players are:

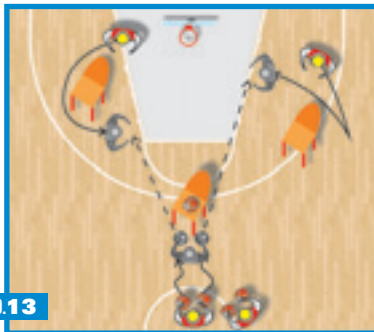
- a) Students of the game. They study the game and their opponents. They know the spots on the floor where they shoot a high percentage, and they know how to get there.
- b) Versatile. The more versatile you are, the more valuable you are. They have the ability to play more than one position. The game now requires the perimeter players to be multidimensional. For example: 1 1/2 guard is a point guard, who can play the 2 guard spot and look to score.



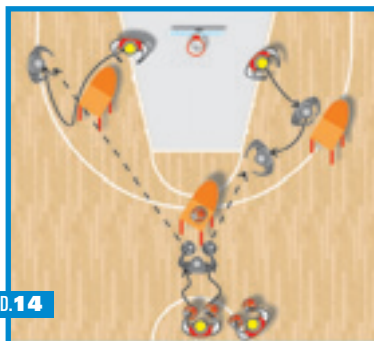
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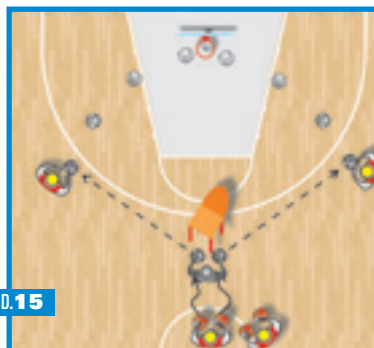
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c) In great shape both physically and mentally. By this I mean the great perimeter players never get tired of moving without the ball. Nor, do they give into fatigue, when they are being pressured as they run the offense. Mentally, they are in great shape as well with clarity of thought. They don't get discouraged if and when they do not get the ball when they feel they are open. Clarity of thought enables the player to make the right decision in those pressured situations.

d) Good free-throw shooters. Primarily because they know this is a "positive/ selfish" play that benefits both the team and the individual player. Furthermore, getting to the free-throw line means that you are putting pressure on the defense. Everyone wants to score, and what better way than by shooting uncontested shots while you are stationary? In my opinion, the great perimeter players attempt at least ten free-throw a game.

e) Always play at different speeds (fast to slow/ slow to fast). By changing your speeds, the perimeter player makes it very difficult on the defender over the course of the game. For example, the players are fast to their spot on the offense set, and then slow as they come off the screen. Playing slow after he/ she catches the ball enables the perimeter player to have more control, allow the play (situation) to develop, and then, when the decision has been made, the player makes his/her move fast to ensure maximum success.

f) Know how to involve their teammates. Last and certainly not least, I think the truly great perimeter players have a great understanding/ knowledge of how to involve their teammates. They involve them by being great passers, thus forcing their teammates to move intelligently without the ball, but all the while expecting a pass when they are open. The great ones know how to use their voices. By using their voices, they engage in communication with their teammates that allow for clarity and understanding of assignments. Their voices can reinforce either positively or negatively based on what the situation requires getting the maximum performance from their teammates. Finally, the really great perimeter players know how to get their teammates involved by using them properly and timely as screeners.

TWO BALL/ PASS/ DRIBBLE AND SHOOT WORKOUT

Now I want to share with you one of my workouts that I use to help develop my perimeter players.

In this particular workout, I want concentrate on the development of:

1. Hand/ coordination
2. Pound dribbling
3. Passing
4. Shooting
5. Basketball knowledge
6. Conditioning through the use of two ball.

The workout starts with the players doing the "Two Ball Stationary Pound Dribble" series which consists of:

- 1) Two ball pound dribble together. Pound dribbling the ball at the same time at shoulder height, then waist height, the knee height, and then ankle height. This should be repeated at the coaches's command. The pound dribble is a hard dribble that requires the dribbler to keep their hands on top of the ball. Thus giving the dribbler more control while dribbling.
- 2) Two ball alternate pound dribble. The dribbler should alternate their dribble at their shoulder, waist, knees, and ankles. This should be repeated at the coach's command.
- 3) The third in this series is called two ball rhythm dribble. The dribbler must pound dribble the two balls together in front of him in a side to side motion. Then they must pound dribble the two balls together on outside of each leg in a front to back motion.

These next drills are what I call the "Two Ball/Pass/Dribble and Shoot Basic One Man Drills": in all of these drills, the location can and should be changed so that the players learn to: understanding different angles on the court and they will also learn which moves are most effective in those certain areas of the court. The basic one - man drills are divided into two categories:

- 1) The player going in the opposite direction of their initial pass (which is illustrated in diagr. from 1 to 5).
- 2) The player going in the same direction of their initial pass (which is illustrated in diagr. from 6 to 8).

In diagr. 1, the player starts at half court, dribbling two basketballs at the same time. They dribble up to the object/defender and execute a one-hand push pass to the right wing while maintaining control of their dribble with the ball in their left hand. After making the pass to the right wing they throw a one - handed push pass to the left wing. The drill is the building block drill, upon which all of the other drills that will follow are built. So it is very important that the player masters this drill first. In diagr. 2 and 3 we advance to allowing the player to shoot shots after they have successfully made a good pass to the wing.

In diagr. 2 everything starts the same as diagr. 1 with the two - ball dribble and one hand push pass to the wing. After making the one hand push pass to the wing, the player then "attacks" the basket with a dribble drive for a lay - up. These drills are one shot drills.

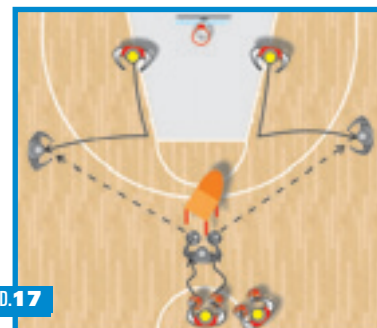
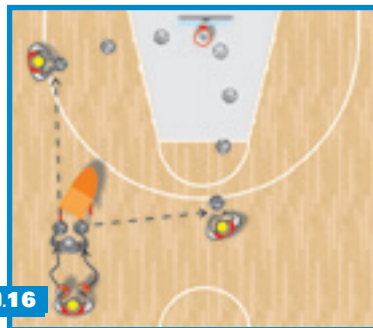
Diagr. 4 and 5 are an illustration of two - shot drills. The drills begin with the player successfully executing two - ball dribbling and a one hand push pass to the wing. Then "exploding" for a jump shot at the elbow, after shooting the first shot, they must run around the object that has been placed at the top of the key to the other elbow to receive a pass to shoot their second shot. The second categories of "Two/Ball/Pass/Dribble and Shoot Basic One Man" drills are illustrated in diagr. 6. The player starts with the two ball dribble and then makes a one-hand push pass to the right wing, while maintaining their dribble with the ball in their left hand they execute a dribble move (crossover, spin, between the legs, behind the back) going in the same direction of their pass. After making a successful dribble move then they are allowed to shoot on the following shots: (lay ups, 2pt. jumper or 3 pt. jumper). In diagr. 7 and 8, are an example of a two shot drill. Much like diagr. 4 and 5, the player must execute a pass to the wing, make a strong dribble move and follow his pass to take his first shot at the elbow and then run around the object to receive a pass for his second shot.

After mastering the "Two-Ball Dribble/Pass and Shoot One Man" drills, now progress into "Two-man" drills. The purpose of the "Two-Ball Dribble/Pass and Shoot Two-Man" drills is to teach:

- 1) How to communicate (work together) through verbal and nonverbal communication. I define communication as information given, received and understood. It is not enough to just talk to one another.
- 2) The passer how to make a pass that the shooter can handle/shoot.
- 3) The shooter how to be "shot ready", give the passer a target with his hands to hit and call for the ball with not only their hands as well as their voice. Diagr. from 9 to 12 show four different examples of "Two-Man" drills:
 - ▼ Diagr. 9: regular.
 - ▼ Diagr. 10: shot fake by wing.
 - ▼ Diagr. 11: moving without the ball cuts.
 - ▼ Diagr. 12: changing of location.

A major part of these drills that I feel is important is that the dribbler/passer must demonstrate: poise/patience, ball control and the ability to deliver a one-hand push pass accurately to the shooter, all the while maintaining his dribble with the other basketball.

The final set of drills in my "Two-Ball Dribble/Pass and Shoot" drills, are the "Three-Man" drills. These drills are absolutely great for teaching the following:

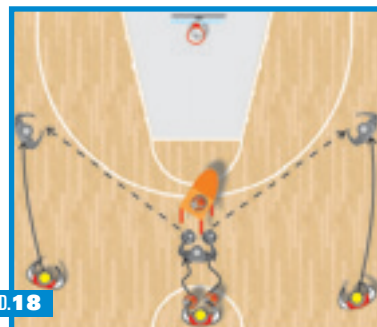


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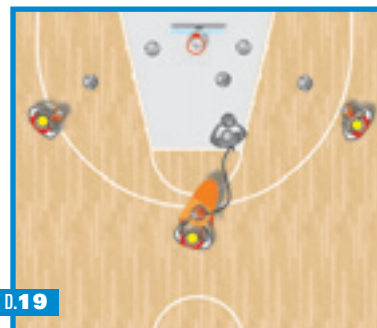
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- 1) How to move effectively without the ball.
- 2) Poise and ball control by the dribbler.
- 3) The ability to make the proper pass at the proper time to the cutter.
- 4) The ability to communicate.

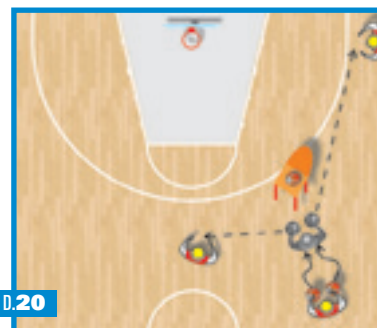
Diagr. 13 is the demonstration of the basic drills to start with when teaching two - man dribble/pass and shoot three - man drills. These two drills are "catch-and-shoot" drills from the wings (diagr. 14), with the pass coming from the top (diagr. 13) and a change of location that with the shots in the corner and the top with the pass coming from the wing. The next set of drills starts to implement moving without the ball that will require the shooters to make basketball cuts such as (backdoor, curl, fade and back screen with shape up). In diagr. 15, 16, and 17, player 1 executes a backdoor cut and player 2 executes a curl cut. All three players must communicate with one another through (verbal and nonverbal communication) to get the proper timing on cuts and passes from the passer. This drill is game like the last series of drills in the "Two-Ball Dribble/Pass and Shoot Three-Man" drills is the incorporation of the third ball which enable all three players the opportunity to shoot. In diagr. 18, the drill starts when the dribbler attack the object and makes a one - hand push pass with one ball to one wing, then make a one hand push pass to the other wing. When the two wing players receive their passes, they are allowed to take shots or make moves that will lead to shots. Then in diagr. 19, the dribbler takes the third ball out of the chair placed at the top of the key, and execute a shot fake and one dribble move for a jump shot at the foul line. In diagr. 20 and 21 are the same drills executed at a different location/angle.



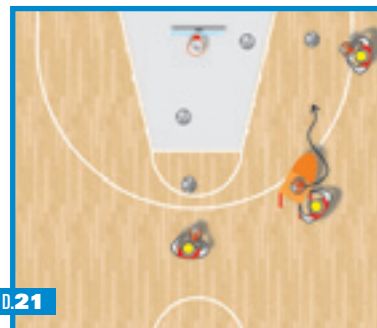
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CONCLUSION

Player and perimeter develop can and should be so much fun. With imagination, creativity and a desire for becoming a student of the game, the player can become an outstanding perimeter player. Passion and desire are intangible qualities that separate the above average from the average and great from the good. The simple formula of input/output says that the more you put in, the more you get out. Finally, don't fear failure, but more importantly, EMBRACE SUCCESS!