

Coaching Clinic Notes – Coach Ryan McCarthy, Fresno State Women’s Basketball

Session Focus: Modern FIBA-Style Offensive Concepts & Pick-and-Roll Execution

Summary

Coach Ryan McCarthy shared his FIBA-inspired offensive system built around spacing, conceptual teaching, and ball screen actions. The offense emphasizes player freedom within structure, efficient spacing, and exploiting mismatches. The clinic included detailed teaching progressions for two-on-two, three-on-three, four-on-four, and five-on-five situations, as well as strategies for attacking switching defenses, zone defenses, and specific coverages like “ice.”

Offensive Philosophy & Spacing Principles

- Inspired by European men’s basketball and built on simplicity and concept mastery.
 - Offensive spacing rules:
 - Wings to **corners first**, then move **above the break**.
 - Keep the ball out of the “river” (between the lane lines).
 - Initial post runs straight to the rim; opposite wing clears opposite the ball.
 - Roles are **interchangeable** between posts and wings.
 - System allows entries beyond traditional high ball screens.
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Two-on-Two Concepts

Over Coverage

- Drive aggressively when defense fights over the screen.
- “Belt buckle” towards the target; attack downhill.

Under Coverage

- Hard roll + rescreen.
- Ball handler decides between elbow short roll or full roll depending on skill.

Switch Coverage

- **Twist:** Screener rolls hard, ball handler attacks after switch.
- **Snap:** Screener changes angle late before rolling.
- Mismatch = “**mouse in the house**” opportunity.

Hard Hedge / Trap

- Ball handler advances ball quickly.
- Creates 2-on-1 or open shot situations.
- Timing of the pop-out is critical to beat early denial.

Three-on-Three Concepts

Roll and Replace

- Guard and post execute hard roll and replace to elbow.

- Coach initiates a two-on-two scenario from there.
- Focus on getting shots inside preferred arc.

Low Post Action: "Prison"

- Low post catches are made below the backboard.
- On middle drive help, step in for high feed.
- Keep post entries simple and high.

Wing Ball Screen Rules

- Opposite post at the opposite elbow.
- Players stay below free-throw line extended (PGs slight exception).
- Emphasis on **reject first**, **short roll**, and **dunk shots** if available.

Point Guard Ball Screen

- Set slightly above the break.
 - Attack first; open shots only in preferred arcs.
 - Against under: attack the closeout.
 - Against switch: failure to recognize mismatch ("mouse") = conditioning penalty.
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Four-on-Four Concepts

- Emphasize **reject rule** on ball screens.
- Go over the top of all screens initially.
- Drive hard, create 2-on-1 advantages.

- Options: score, dump down, or reverse to open post.
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Five-on-Five Integration

High Ball Screen into Flow

- Start with roll-replace; if it stalls, flow into wing ball screen.
- Adjust spacing depending on player's shooting vs. driving ability.
- Use “**lift pass**” to free shooters after hard rolls.
- Players can break off plays once an advantage is created.

Wing Entry to Ball Screen

- Wing entry leads to immediate ball screen.
- Rejection is first read; follow-up screens by bottom players if needed.

Switching Defenses

- Don't re-screen when there's a mismatch.
- Post mirrors the point guard to exploit "mouse."
- In transition, the post seals early; PG reads for entry or kick-out + slip.
- Maintain flow even when attacking a mismatch.

Side Ball Screen vs. Switch

- If defense switches all, it's a sign of low post pressure.
- Attack mismatches aggressively.
- Maintain perimeter positioning to preserve driving angles.

Zone Offense Strategies

Strong Side Flash

- Treat zone like man-to-man initially.
- Flash hard from strong side and roll; creates potential double-team.
- Options: shoot, pass inside, or reverse.

Wing Ball Screen vs. Zone

- Set ball screen off wing entry.
- Occupy help defender to free shooter or passing lane.
- Use “**stampede**” catches for non-shooters to attack sagging defenders.

Outside Ball Screen / Manipulation

- Use outside screen to force hard rolls.
- Pull post to elbow to create mid-range or drive opportunities.
- Against 1-3-1: continue screening principles; treat zone hedges like man.

Handling Traps and Adjustments

Traps on the Wing (Man)

- Pass to PG or flash middle.
- Trapped player can hard roll or slip to short corner for spacing.

Post Pop in P&R

- Post mirrors bottom spacing and pops **toward the river**.
 - Avoids clogging driving lanes.
 - One-on-one drills reinforce finishing after the pop.
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Attacking Specific Coverages

Attacking “Ice”

- Use flat ball screen + short roll and mirroring.
- Use **butt screen** for additional options.
- Be **quick but not rushed** in decision-making.

Wing Ice Counter

- Pop player back for spacing, then screen and go action.
 - Manipulate defender’s angle using give-and-go.
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Practice Emphasis & Development

- Two-on-two drills are foundational.
 - Separate work with guards and posts builds chemistry and specialized skill.
 - Post development focuses on interior passing, footwork, and finishing from the hip.
 - Decision-making emphasized through live reads in breakdown drills.
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Zone Defense Adaptation

- Use consistent ball screen principles.
 - Stretch the zone with high flash and quick movement.
 - Force defenders to switch from zone to man instinctively.
 - Create **mismatch post entries** or **guard vs. big isolations**.
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Closing Remarks

Coach McCarthy thanked the attendees and gave credit to **Coach Kat** and **Coach Penon** (now a D-I head coach). He invited questions via email at ryanmccarthy@mail.fresnostate.edu and encouraged attendees to reach out—stating he'd always respond honestly, even if he didn't have the answer right away.