



FIBA

We Are Basketball



by Claudio Papini

THE TRANSITION FROM OFFENSE TO DEFENSE AND VICE VERSA

Papini is one of the best teachers of fundamentals in Italian basketball. During his 18 years with the Rimini team, he has worked with dozens of players, some who have played for the National team.

The fastbreak is one of the most spectacular aspects in all of basketball. Ball possession changes frequently, and players switch quickly from offense to defense and vice versa.

Players must be able to adapt to these ever-changing situations:

- I don't have possession, I must play defense.
- I have possession, I play offense.
- I play offense, I lose the possession of the ball, I must play defense immediately.

This continuous change-from offense to defense and from defense to offense—are “mental transitions” and involve the quickly changing thought processes based on having the ball or not.

To play the fastbreak style basketball, players must be in excellent physical condition, but they must also be mentally prepared for these quick transitions.

The fastbreak starts from a transition from defense to offense, due to following situations:

- A defensive rebound after a missed shot.
 - An intercepted pass.
 - A stolen ball from the player with the ball.
 - A poorly thrown out-of-bounds pass.
- To start and finish the fastbreak, I prefer to use the primary fastbreak.

Once the defensive player has the ball, he must take the most direct route and run full speed toward the offensive basket before the defense has the possibility to recover.

The ball must be brought to the middle lane of the court; two players must run in the two lateral lanes, leaving the other two players to fill in the lanes that are free.

I personally think the secondary break has some limitations regarding the above concept.

I see many problems at the youth level, where the players often think of the different solutions of the secondary fastbreak (first trailer, types of cut), and, therefore, they are not totally aware of the favorable options found in the primary fastbreak.

To build this type of the mentality, you should use practice drills that reproduce possible game situations, such as:

1. 1 vs. 0
2. 1 vs. 1
3. 1 vs. 2
4. 2 vs. 1
5. 2 vs. 2
6. 3 vs. 1
7. 3 vs. 2

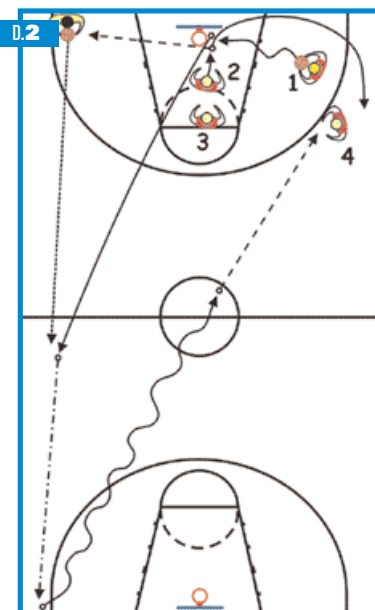
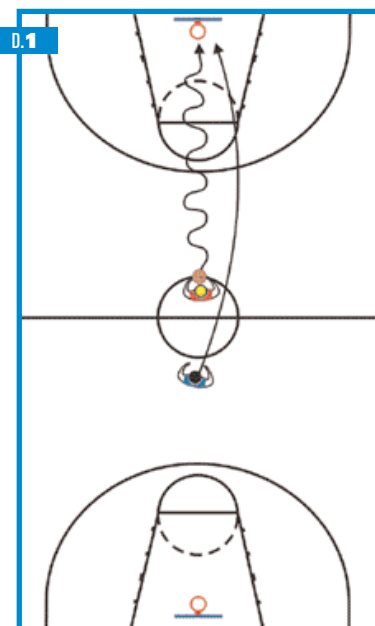
QUICKNESS TEST WITH AND WITHOUT THE BALL

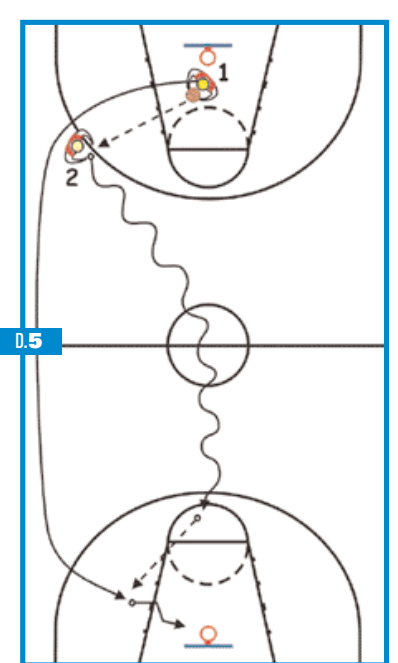
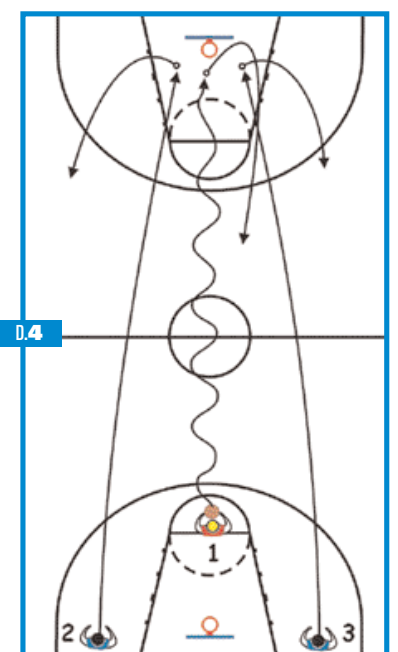
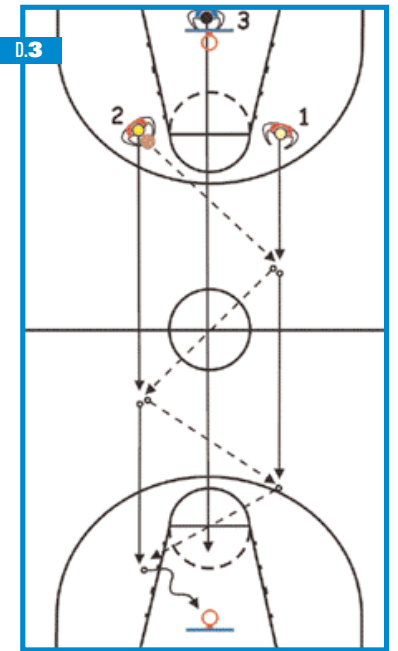
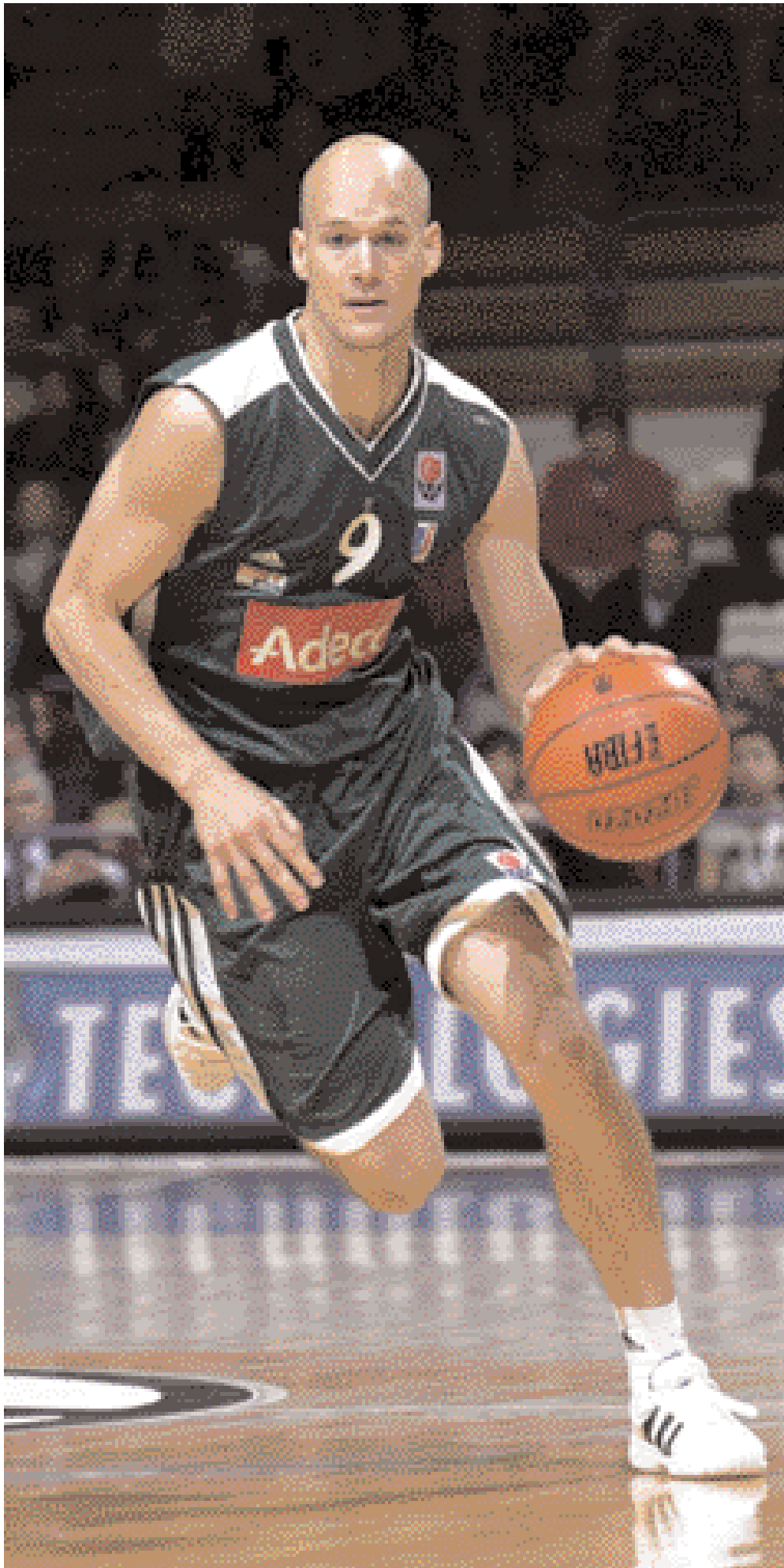
An offensive player has the ball while a defensive player plays behind him, a few feet away.

The offensive player dribbles to the basket as quickly as possible and the defensive player must touch the back of the offensive player before he makes a lay-up (diagr. 1).

TRANSITION FROM OFFENSE TO DEFENSE

Two lines of players, one in the corner and the other one in the lane. The coach has the ball and stands near the baseline. 1 goes to the basket. At the same time, the coach rolls





the ball on the floor to the opposite side. 1 runs toward the ball, goes over it, and makes defensive slides. He then catches the ball, dribbles toward mid court, passes to 4, and goes to the end of the line, behind 3. After 1 shoots, 2 catches the ball, passes to the coach and goes behind the line of 4 in the corner. 4 repeats the same moves as 1 (diagr. 2).

**DEFENSIVE RECOVERY
TWO-ON-ONE**

The defensive player 3 stands behind the baseline; 1 and 2, the offensive players, have the ball at the free throw line extension. 1 and 2 pass the ball to each other and must shoot before the defensive recovery of 3 (diagr. 3). Going back, 2 and 3 play two on one against 1.

ONE-ON-TWO/TWO-ON-ONE

1 has the ball at the free throw line, with 2 and 3 standing near the baseline. 1 dribbles quickly toward the basket and tries to shoot

before the defensive recovery of 2 and 3. Going back, 2 and 3 play offense versus 1 (diagr. 4).

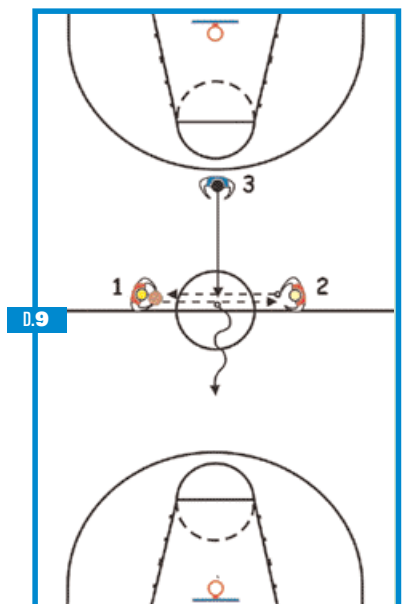
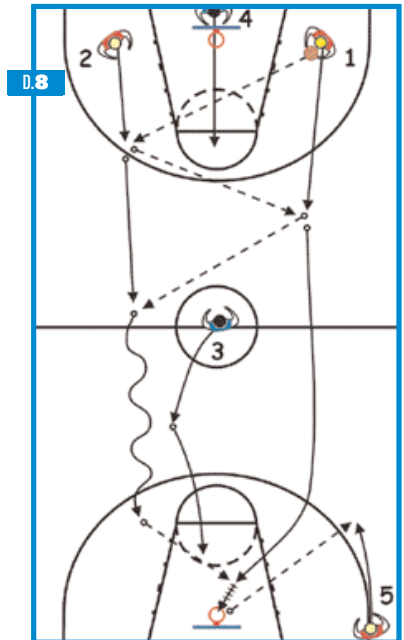
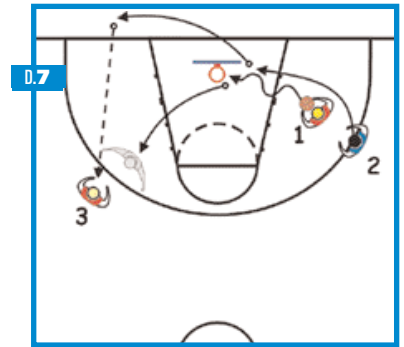
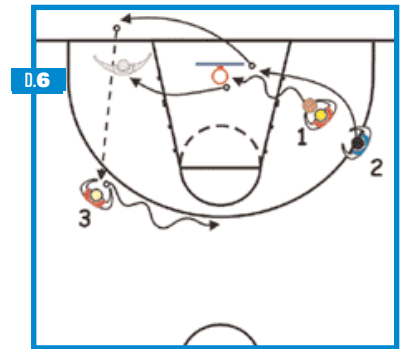
TWO VERSUS NONE

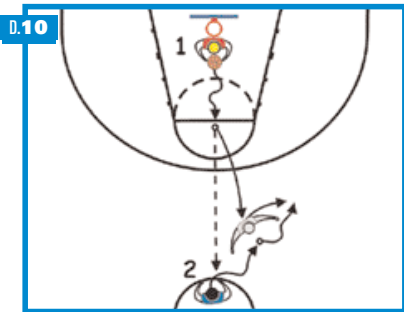
1 throws the ball off the backboard, rebounds and passes to 2, who dribbles to the middle of the court, while 1 goes to the right lateral lane. 2 passes to 1, who shoots a lay-up. In this situation, 1 has the tendency to wait for the pass instead running forward. To avoid this, he should run under the basket and come back, and not wait for the pass (diagr. 5).

CONTESTED OUT-OF-BOUNDS

We put 2, a defensive player, behind 1, who goes to the basket. If beaten, 2 tries to recover, catches the ball, and makes the out-of-bounds pass to 3. 1, after the shot, plays defense and puts pressure on 2, harassing the pass to 3 (diagr. 6).

Second choice with the same drill: 1, after the shot, puts pressure on 3 (diagr. 7).





CONTINUITY: TWO-ON-ONE

1 and 2 pass the ball to each other and then they play two-on-one against 3. At the end of the action, 3 plays on offense with 5 against the defensive man, 4, who comes up high (diagr. 8).

TWO-ON-ONE STATIC

1 and 2, standing at mid court, pass the ball to each other with their feet facing toward the basket, standing and without making any fakes. 3 tries to intercept the ball and if he succeeds, he goes to the basket on the other half court; if unsuccessful, 2 and 3 go to the basket (diagr. 9).

ONE VERSUS NONE

Two possible situations of one versus none: the defense intercepts or steals the ball, or the player on the offensive transition receives a pass. If there is no defensive player between him and the basket, he goes straight to the basket via the shortest route, without turning his head, and ready to take a hard foul.

ONE-ON-ONE

1 purposely throws a bad pass to 2, the defensive man, and then attacks 2, who plays on offense. They play one on one full court (diagr. 10). You can also play the opposite way, with 2, who makes the pass to 1, playing defense. To correct to an offensive mistake, you need to be very aggressive on the ball.

ONE-ON-ONE WITH THE COACH

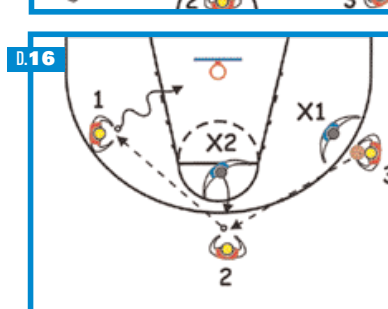
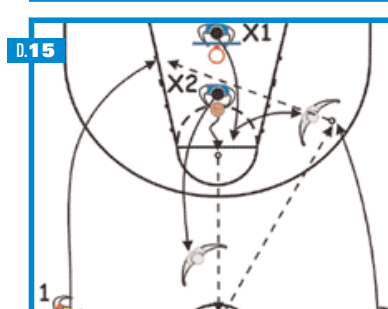
The coach passes the ball to the offensive man 1, who plays one on one with 2. At the end of the action, 2 goes on offense and plays full court with 1 (diagr. 11).

TWO-ON-ONE

First Option: 1 passes to 2 and 1 plays defense. 2 dribbles towards 1 and passes to 3 only when 3 is below the free-throw line extension, and 3 goes to the basket (diagr. 12).

Second option: If 1 recovers on 3, 3 passes the ball back to 2, who goes to the basket (diagr. 13).

A note: if the offensive player without the ball is at the same or higher level of the defensive player, the ball handler does not pass to him because there is no clear advantage.



THREE-ON-ONE OPTIONS

If X1 goes aggressively and directly at 2, 2 passes to 4, the player most distant from the defense and nearest to the basket. 3 runs toward basket for the offensive rebound, if there is a missed shot, or to receive a pass from 4, if 1 is pressuring 4 (diagr. 14).

THREE-ON-TWO DRILL

X2 passes the ball to 2 and plays defense on him, while X1 plays "L" defense. 2 passes to 3 and X1 plays aggressive defense on him. 3 can pass the ball to 1, who is free and goes to the basket (diagr. 15). If 3 cannot pass to 1 or drive to the basket, he gives the ball to 2 and 2 to 1 (diagr. 16).