Doug Porter
Attack Basketball : The Trap Defense

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Introduction
Coach Porter coaches the women’s basketball team at Olivet Nazarene University. He starts by talking about the traditional defenses that teams might play.

Defensive Philosophy

Historical Approach to Defense

Three Types of Defenses
1) Man to Man
2) Zone
3) Pressure Trapping

Levels of Defense
1) Quarter Court
2) Half Court
3) Three Quarters
4) Full and Full Deny

Attack Basketball
Attack Basketball is the name he gives for their style of play. It’s about making the most aggressive choice possible. Wants to choose an approach that is going to force the temp and dictate a high speed game. They like to play a continuous full court trapping defense. They want to trap in all situations. Very few teams are able to run their normal half court offense against them.

The primary purpose of their defense is not to prevent an easy shot. The primary purpose is to get more shots than their opponent. Their goal is to get the ball back quickly through a steal or missed shot. They will give up easy shots.

They give up 95 points a game but also lead the nation in steals and winning margin. They are at plus 16 points per game.

Evaluating Defense
They do not rate their defense on points given up or on field goal percentage. They look at how it complements the offense. In the scenario below they analyze 10 defensive possessions. They give up 60% shooting which is horrible defensively. However they only allow .6 points per possession which is excellent. The 5 turnovers are also likely candidates for turning into easy points at the other end.

<table>
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<tr>
<th># Possessions</th>
<th>Shots Allowed</th>
<th>Shots Made</th>
<th>FG %</th>
<th>TO’s Created</th>
<th>Points Per Possession</th>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
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**Forcing Tempo**
You must accept that the purpose of a trapping defense is fundamentally different than conventional basketball. Their purpose is to force tempo and create turnovers. They want to shoot 90 shots a game and create 33 turnovers per game. If they reach these totals they know their defense is doing the job. Turnovers create good shots and good rebounding opportunities. Quick scores in transition also lead to additional pressing opportunities.

**Meltdown**
This is their goal each game is to create a meltdown by the opponent. It is the state where the opponent is so fatigued that they start to make series of bad decisions and allow the game to be put away.

**Defensive Principles**

**Defense Should Mirror the Offense**
They do not want any transition time between defense and offense and vice versa. What this mostly means is that the post players are positioned up front on the press so that as they transition to offense they are already in their spots.

**You Have to Gamble**
You have to give up something to get something. They encouraging gambling

**Get the Ball Back within 12 Seconds**
This means as the ball gets advanced to the front court they will even gamble more as it’s now a race against the clock.

**Be Unpredictable**
They do not drill on specific rotations on the floor. They do predetermine where they go on first pass inbounds but after that they allow for a great deal of freedom.

**Accept Layups**
You need to be willing to accept easy layups at time. They also try to quickly turn layups into positive events by pushing the ball back the other direction as quickly as possible looking for a quick score.

**Keep the Clock Moving**
They have two situations in which they should never foul.

1) They should never foul in a trap; never reach in
2) They never want to foul the shooter
Substitute Every 60 Seconds
They substitute every 60 seconds or less. If you do not substitute every minute you lose the pop and explosiveness in the player’s legs that make the press effective.

Overview of Trapping Defenses
Coach Porter breaks down his defensive trapping strategy based on 4 different game scenarios. They prepare and approach each scenario in a slightly different way.

1) After a Made Shot
2) After a Missed Shot
3) After a Dead ball
4) After the Ball is advanced to the front court

Made Shot Presses
They have four different defensive calls after a made shot: On, Off, Stay, and Zone.

On Press
They call this the “On Press” because the low post player starts out on the basketball. This is their bread and butter press and the one they use much of the game. Much of the time is starts out looking like a diamond and one press except the safety plays much more aggressively (almost like a 1-2-2). It is not a zone press though as they find players to match up with in their areas. They like their post players up front so they can transition to offense quickly.

General Responsibilities
5 – Pressures the inbound and then looks to trap first pass
4 – Takes away deep but cheats up as far as possible
3 – Plays on outside shoulder of strong side opponent
2 – Prevents easy weak side passes; looks to steal quick pass back to in bounder
1 – Ball side sideline and then rotates to cover middle
**Alignments**

**Against 1-2-2 alignment**

The ball size wing (3 in this case) plays on the outside shoulder of the nearest player on this side of the floor. Reason for this is to prevent the quick pass to the corner. He picked up this technique from Coach Arsenault at Grinnell.

2 cheats to the middle so they can take away return pass to in bounder.

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**Return Pass to Inbounder**

The 2 works hard to take away pass back to in bounder. They should already be cheating up. 1 then takes away short middle and 4 takes away deep middle and ball side sideline.

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**Against a Staggered Front**

Most of the time with a stagger front what you will see is a screen and roll back. The rule on all screens is for the person being screened to step back and prepare for the switch.
**Against 1-2-1-1 alignment**

All the same rules apply except the 1 always moves up to take the closer opponent.

**Against 1-3-1 alignment**

Against a 3 up alignment the one comes up to cover the middle player and 4 moves over to cover the deep player.

One point of difference here is that the 3 does not locate on the outside shoulder but inside shoulder since opponents starts out outside the three point line.

**Against 1-4 alignment**

Wings cover outside players and 1 and 4 cover inside players.

This alignment makes them vulnerable to touchdown pass. They will take the person off the ball and put them as safety.
Since they fear the touchdown pass they will often have the 4 move back to middle of floor to take away the long pass. The 2 slides over and covers the next closest person to the ball.

If the in-bounder runs the baseline towards the open wing the defenders shift over and call out “**Bump**”.

**Off Press**
In the “Off Press” they take the 5 player off the ball. They run the off press for one of two reasons. The first is they use the 5 player off the ball to double the opponent’s best ball handler to prevent the first pass from going into their hands. Second, they like to run the “Off Press” if the other team clears out and leaves only the primary ball handler back.

One of the primary reasons they use the off call is to double team the opponent’s best ball handler forcing the ball to go to other players.

Many times they will use the off call against a 3 up or 1-3-1 alignment which can cause trouble with 2 quick passes. They prevent ball from easily going to the middle.

1’s is now in a true interceptor position. Primary responsibilities are to take away any lobs over the top and to take away quick pass from wing to diagonal cutter as diagrammed to the left.
They will also often use the OFF call against a 1 up press break. They will sandwich the one up player between 1 and 5. They use the OFF call here because otherwise when they trapped the first pass in a return pass to the in-bounder would be almost impossible to cover with rotations.

**Stay Press**
He picked up the ideas here from Gary Smith at Redlands. Everyone matches up originally as if it was an ON call. The initial trap, however, is delayed. Players stay on their players with no trapping until the ball gets to midcourt. They prefer the ball to cross the half court line before jumping the ball and trapping. The player on the ball tries to turn the ball handler as many times as possible. They try to keep the ball handler working and occupied. As the ball nears midcourt they look to trap near the sidelines. They like to use 5 as the second trapper. They use the Stay call a lot with the 1 up or clear out alignments.

This press is effective as a change of pace. They also like to use the stay call against a one up press break.

One thing to be aware of on this press is for the players off the ball to be in a soft deny position.
**Zone Press**
The ZONE call is a defense they use against teams that like to throw the touchdown pass or also teams that have a great ball handler that is difficult to trap. The difference here is that instead of matching up with players in an area they protect the area. This essentially turns into a diamond and one press most of the time. The 2 takes away the diagonal pass instead of gambling on the inbounds. 1 takes away ball side sideline. Once the ball is inbouded their normal press rules go into effect. The closest two players go trap the ball.

![Zone Trap Diagram]

The major difference here is that players are protecting an area on the court instead of matching up with a man in their area and staying. 2 instead of being aggressive with the pass back to the in-bounder will protect the diagonal passing lane. 1 will protect ball side sideline.

**Making Adjustments**
Their priority press is the “On Press”. It is their bread and butter press. It is the most aggressive. However, almost every game they will experiment with trial and error to find the most effective press against each opponent. Forcing the tempo is the critical part of their defense. He reminds coaches that he believes it’s important to not get too conservative. If you buy into this style of play you need to stay with it for the duration of the game.
Dead Ball presses
There are three different locations for dead ball presses: 1) Full Court, 2) Sideline, and 3) Baseline out of bounds.

Full Court
The full court dead ball press is essentially the same as their made shot press. A couple of things important to note here though are as follows. The first is to be more aware of the touchdown pass. With more time to setup the opponent may look to go long. The second is to be prepared for different alignments. He talks about how to prepare for the 3 up and 4 up sets as well as the box sets.

Sideline
The rules for backcourt sideline are almost the same as full court as well. He positions his defensive players on the front side of the opponents forcing the inbounds to the backcourt. This is different that coach Arsenault at Grinnell who positions them on the backside forcing the inbounds towards the hoop and encouraging a quick shot. Again, he always sets the first trap with the 2 closest players.

Baseline OB
When defending the inbounds under their opponent’s basket they always line up in this diamond and one alignment. The goal again is to get a quick trap.

1 protects the weak side of the floor all the way out to the corner. The other 4 players get in a diamond as shown in the diagram.

Clog adjustment – To protect the paint more they will at times have 5 pinch down but they prefer not to do this.

They prefer to force a pass strong side above the FT line. 2 and 5 will trap that while the 3 takes away passing lane out top. If the entry pass is below the FT line 4 will not come out and trap. They are in their normal half court defense once the ball comes out of first trap.

Missed Shot presses
One of the unique things in this system is that they continue trapping on missed shots. The goal again is maximum pressure all the time. They look to trap as soon as the opponent secures the rebound. The attack 2 point misses slightly different than 3 point misses.

2 Point Misses
1) The deepest player back automatically becomes the safety
2) The closest two players always trap the rebounder
3) The remaining two players cover the gaps
4) This turns into a 2-2-1 press

3 Point Misses
1) Their 3 point shooters never follow their shots but quickly rotate out as the safety
2) Front people are called trappers
3) Middle two are called gapers

Front Court Press (half court)
When in their half court defense their philosophy does not change. They want 2 defenders running at an offensive player as much as possible. Their half court defense is just a continuation of their full court defense.

Alignment

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| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
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Again, they like to defend with one of their post players out top so transition game has them right into their offense.

Half court defense looks a lot like a 1-3-1 trapping defense.

Passes Above FT Line

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| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
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Depending on what side of the floor the ball goes to, the 5 man looks to trap with the wing. 1 flashes from high post area to ball side sideline taking away or even teasing the corner pass.

4 flashes to cover the high post area. He can deny the high post or use what they call a bait technique. Bait means encourage the pass and to even tease the pass but be ready to anticipate and steal.

The weak side wing takes away the cross court reversal pass. The deep corner is open but a difficult pass with pressure on the ball.
Passes Below FT Line

On passes below the free throw line or to the corner, wing will go and trap with 1. 5 will take away pass back out top. They call this the lag pass. Opposite wing flashes to the high post and denies or teases (bait).

Passes Into the High Post

The 4 man is not responsible for the high post once the ball enters that area. The 4 stays home and protects the bucket.

1 also drops back towards the basket and plays cat and mouse trying to encourage the 15 foot shot but nothing closer in. They like the opponent taking this shot.

2 & 3 take away the lag passes back out top.

Techniques

1) Avoid Lunging – stay on balance
2) Avoid Overruns - don’t make habits of over running the balls
3) Avoid Reaching – There is a different between active hands and reaching in. Keep your feet moving and be disciplined with your hands.
4) Chasing – the turn and trap from behind
5) Turning – Defender on ball should try and get as many turns as possible
6) Circle Trap
**Drills**

**Chase and Turn (1 on 1)**

Two sets of lines on both sides of the floor. Ball handler attacks mid court on the dribbler. Defender runs alongside and attempts to turn just after mid court.

The center defenders who would most likely be taking the inbound pass in game situation would chase and trap from behind.

**1 on 2 – 2 on 1**

1 on 2 at this end of the floor. Defender starts drill by passing to the lone offensive player. Ball handler then tries to get to midcourt while the two defenders look to contain and trap.

The other end of the floor is 2 on 1 with focus on defense. Offense should be looking to get a lay-in or a foul.

Defense is looking to take away layup. Forcing any other shot besides layup is a success. It is a cardinal sin in this drill to turn you back on one of the players. They choose to block out the shooter.
3 on 2

Defensively this drill focuses on stopping the ball, flying out to pressure the first pass, and then diving to protect your hoop. You should never give up layups in this scenario.

Offensively, you are looking to make good decisions in half court. The ball handler should follow the pass to the ball side elbow looking for return pass.

Blitz

This is their version of the 11 man fast break. They will keep track of individual points in this drill and reward the winner. You get points for steals, rebounds, and assists.

The details of this drill are as follows. It is a full court 3-on-2 drill where the rebounder always stays on offense. There are four total outlet lines with two at each end of the floor. Rebounder outlets the ball and joins those two players on his side of the floor in a 3 on 2. Two new defenders step on every time from opposite outlet lines. The rebounder in this drill makes the decision each time to outlet the ball or blast out with the dribble. You can also decide for them to emphasize a certain skill. You also allow defenders to knock the ball away from the rebounder if they are not secure with the ball.

4 on 3 Scramble

This drill teaches defensive anticipation in the front court. You can play it at both ends of the floor. There are 4 offensive players and 3 defensive players on the court at one time.

You play games to 6 points. Offense gets 1 point for each 3 point basket made. That's the only shot the offense can take. Defense gets 2 points for a stop and rebound. In their system they always have the shooter rotate to the top of the key as safety.
5 on 5 Trap

This is a half court drill that teaches and reinforces their reads in their half court pressure defense. The defense goes for 15 consecutive seconds making their reads, covering rotations, playing cat and mouse, looking for quick traps, defending lag passes, and jamming the high post.

Missed Shot Drill
This is not so much a competitive drill but just walking through assignments. It is 5 on 5 half court. Defense starts with hands behind their backs. Coach passes out to perimeter player who shoots. On the rebound the 2 nearest players trap. The next two fill the gaps and the deepest player covers the safety.

Dead Ball Presses
This is a 5 on 5 live full court drill until a shot and rebound occurs. The drill starts with coach handing the ball to the in-bounder much like a referee does. If a steal occurs we let them try and convert. If a shot occurs and a defensive rebound is grabbed then we restart the drills. Lets you work on any of your full court dead ball presses in a controlled environment.

Net Press Game
He calls this the net press game because the coach lays it up through the net and the two teams immediately react and get into their designated press. Players circle under the hoop as the coach lays the ball up through the net.

Conclusion

See RunAndGun@Yahoo.com

Warns of the dangers of over coaching.