Basketball Defense – (1-2-2 & 3-2) Zone Defense

Basketball Defense - 1-2-2 and 3-2 Half-Court Zone Defenses

From the Coach’s Clipboard Basketball Playbook, @ http://www.coachesclipboard.net

1-2-2 Zone Defense

Strengths

The 1-2-2 zone has the advantages of being able to pressure the ball on the outside arc, allow for some trapping, and can be effective against a good outside shooting team (whereas the 2-3 zone is more effective against inside scoring).

Weaknesses

The major weaknesses are the (1) high post area, and (2) this defense can be attacked from the corners. Study the diagrams to understand how the zone shifts, or moves, and see the animation also.

Read Zone Defense for detailed tips on playing zone defense, and Zone Rebounding for rebounding tips.
See also: 1-3-1 Zone Defense, 2-3 (2-1-2) Zone Defense

Ball on the wing.

See Diagram B. The wing defender covers this and X1 drops down to the ball-side free-throw line area.
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Trapping the wing.

See Diagram C. If you want to gamble a little and trap the wing, use X1 and the ball-side wing to make the trap. The opposite wing slides into the high post. Although trapping the wing adds an element of risk to your defense, you might consider this when the ball-handling skills of the offensive perimeter players is suspect, or if you are behind and need to get pressure on the ball. Many teams will try to attack this zone from the corner. Your defenders must shift quickly to prevent the pass from the corner to the low post.

Ball in the corner, no trap, deny the corner to wing pass.

See Diagram D. X4 will come out on the ball, and X5 must really move and "get there" to defend the ball-side low post. The weak-side wing (X3) will drop down to the weak-side low block and cover the backside. X2 will deny the pass back out.

Trapping the corner

See Diagram E. You can try trapping the corner if X2 can get down there quickly. Once again, X4 will come out on the ball, and the ball-side wing (X2) will drop down and create the trap. X5 must really move and "get there" to defend the ball-side low post. X1 fills the gap between the ball-side elbow and the three-point arc. The weak-side wing (X3) will move just inside the free-throw line and cover the high post and backside.

Defending the high post

This can be a real problem with this zone. We'll discuss some strategies for stopping this.

1. When the ball is on the wing, and you are not trapping the wing, X1 should slide down and deny the pass to the high post. See Diagram F.

2. When the ball is on the wing, and you are trapping the wing, then the opposite wing must defend the high post. See Diagram G.

3. When the ball is passed to the point, if the pass to the point came from a wing, then the opposite wing must defend the high post (if there is a high post player there). See
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Diagrams H and I.

4. If you are still having difficulty stopping the high post, and if the opponent's point guard is not a strong outside shooter, then consider going to a straight 3-2 zone.

![Diagram F](image1) ![Diagram G](image2) ![Diagram H](image3) ![Diagram I](image4)

Diagram F. High post coverage, ball on wing.
Diagram G. High post coverage, trapping the wing.
Diagram H. High post coverage. Ball passed to point.
Diagram I. High post coverage. Ball passed to point.

3-2 Zone Defense

With the 3-2 zone, you drop the point defender (X1) down to the free throw line. Because of this, you can also position your wing defenders out a little wider.

This will help in your defense against the high post, but allows the point guard some open shots.

With the 3-2 zone, you can still cover the wing the same as in the 1-2-2 zone seen in Diagrams B. You trap the wing with the wing defender and the middle defender, while the opposite wing slides into the high post (Diagram K below).

You can cover the corner by having the ball-side low defender (X4) come out and the weak-side low defender (X5) go to the ball-side low block... exactly the same as with the
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1-2-2 zone (Diagrams D and E above). Optionally, instead of X5 sliding over to cover the ball-side low block, cover the ball-side low post with X1 sliding down (see Diagram L). The weak-side wing (X3) will move to the ball-side elbow.

Related pages: Principles of Zone Defense, Zone Rebounding, 2-3 (2-1-2) Zone Defense, 1-3-1 Zone Defense, and Amoeba Defense.

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