

How to Break Any Type of Press and Avoid Turnovers

www.BreakthroughBasketball.com

Written By Jeff Haefner



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Types of Presses - Understanding How They Work

To beat pressure without turning the ball over, the first thing you must do is identify the “type” of press. Then you can determine which strategy to use.

Presses can be broken down into two main categories – “**man to man**” and “**zone**”.

Man to Man Press

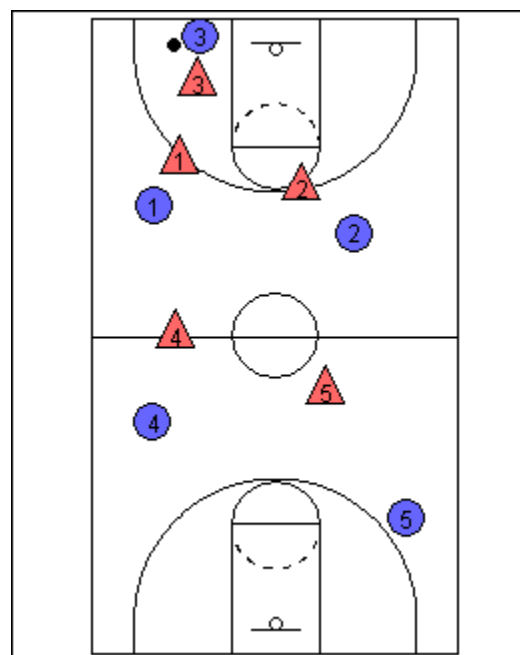
We'll start with man to man because it's a little simpler to deal with. There are variations, but most often you'll see straight up full court man to man presses. Teams that are deep and athletic tend to use this type of press.

These presses usually follow the same principles as a normal half court man to man defense. If you look at the diagram to the right, you'll notice the players “1 pass away” are in denial position. The players “2 passes away” are in help position sagging off their man. There is also ball pressure which is important to make the full court man press work. The only difference is the distance is much greater, so the defense has to spread out more.

In most situations, the biggest challenge in beating a “man press” is to get the ball in bounds. To learn how to inbound the ball effectively, see **Component #1** below.

Once the ball is inbounds, you clear out all players on the team and let your point guard bring the ball down one-on-one. When the other players on the team clear out and run down court, their defenders will follow. This leaves the entire back court open for your point guard to bring the ball down.

Example of Positioning in Full Court Man Defense



Point Guard TIPS: Instruct your point guard to be patient and wait for the rest of the team to completely clear out down court. After the catch, it's also helpful for the point guard to use a basic jab step (before dribbling), to get some space on the defender, then start dribbling up the floor. Sometimes a simple jab step allows the point guard to blow past the defender and dribble all the way up the court without trouble.

Keep your head up and watch out for the run-and-jump or double team. A good point guard should be able to see the double team coming. Some teams will try to double the point guard

along the sideline, trying to force a turnover. A skilled point guard should be able to step-back or spin to beat the double team and then hit the open player down court. The key is to keep their head up and avoid the area just past half court. Your point guard should have their head up and be aware of the danger spot just past half court. They do not want to get in a double team there. As a general rule, point guards can avoid this problem by keeping the ball away from the sideline. The defense might try to force them to the sideline, but the point guard should fight to keep the ball in the middle of the court.

Variations of the Man to Man Press

Most teams will play straight up man to man, but you might run into a team that incorporates any of the following tactics:

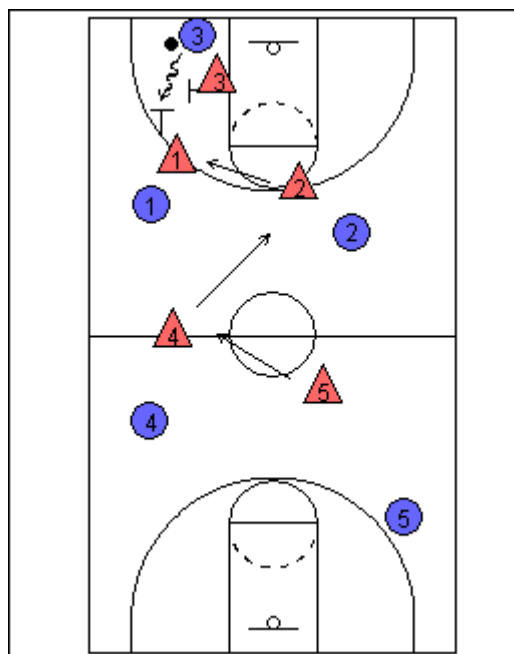
Traps

Traps can occur in a variety of places on the court. We'll go through one example so you can see a common way that man to man traps are implemented.

In the example to the right, Defensive Player 3 influences the ball handler the sideline. After a couple dribbles, Defensive Player 1 closes in to trap the ball.

A good defensive team will anticipate and try to take away the closest pass. As you can see in the diagram, Defensive Players 2, 4, and 5 all rotate one man closer to the ball. They leave the player farthest from the ball (Player 5) wide open. If they do a good job of pressuring the ball and trapping, then it will be impossible for Player 3 to pass to the wide open Player 5 down the court.

Teams that employ full court man to man traps can use almost any criteria and rules to initiate the trap. They could wait for the ball handler to take two dribbles. They could specify certain areas of the court (like just past the half court line). Or they could even use verbal cues to initiate the trap and let players on the court decide when they want to do it.

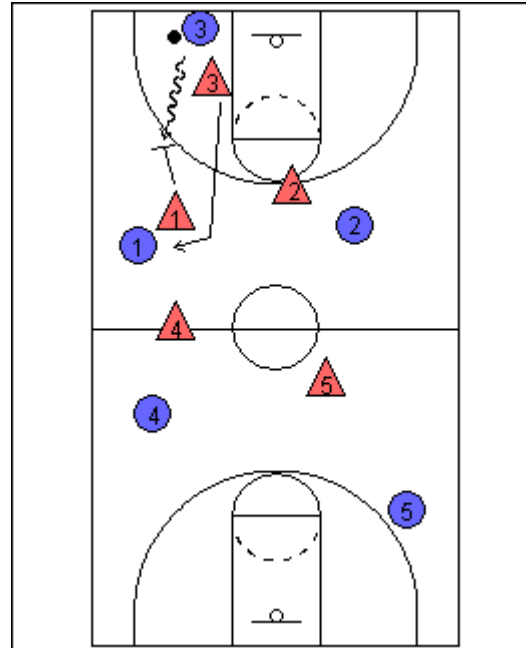


Run and Jump

The Run and Jump is essentially a defensive switch. It can disrupt the ballhandler, slow them down, and potentially cause a turnover.

Like a trap, the run and jump can be initiated in full court, half court, or any where on the floor. In the example to the right, Player 3 dribbles the ball up the court. Defensive Player 1 runs at the ball to contain and stop the ball. Defensive Player 3 switches and continues momentum to guard Player 1.

The switch will often cause the ball handler to pick up their dribble and occasionally throw a bad pass. The other 3 defensive players will usually anticipate and look for an easy pass to steal.



Dealing with Man Press Variations

When dealing with these man to man variations, your point guard and clearing out quickly is key. The point guard needs to keep their head up and be ready for the traps and jumps. In addition, other players on the team should very quickly clear out to open up the back court. They should also maintain good spacing to help the point guard in case of trouble.

If the point guard happens to get trapped, a good tactic is to have 3 players cut to the ball at different angles. Each player should be coming from a different area of the court and should maintain spacing.

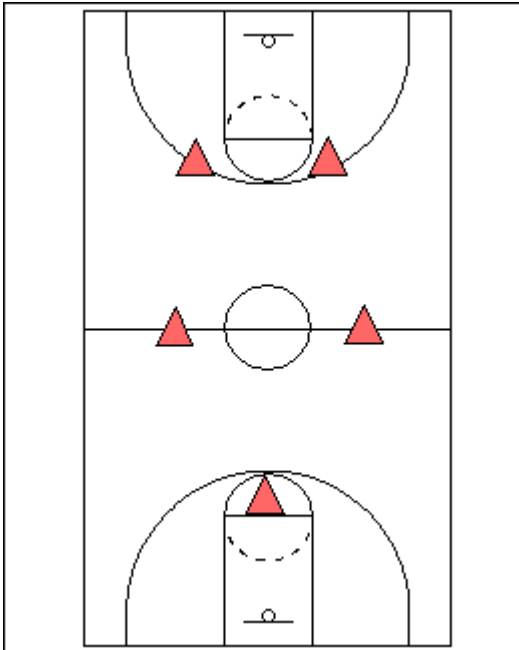
Dealing with Full Court Denial

In some cases you might have trouble inbounding the ball without turning it over. I have found the most effective methods are to teach your guard how to box out and to use the "line" formation. To learn how this works, see the section "Component 1 - Inbounding the Ball" under the Zone Press section below.

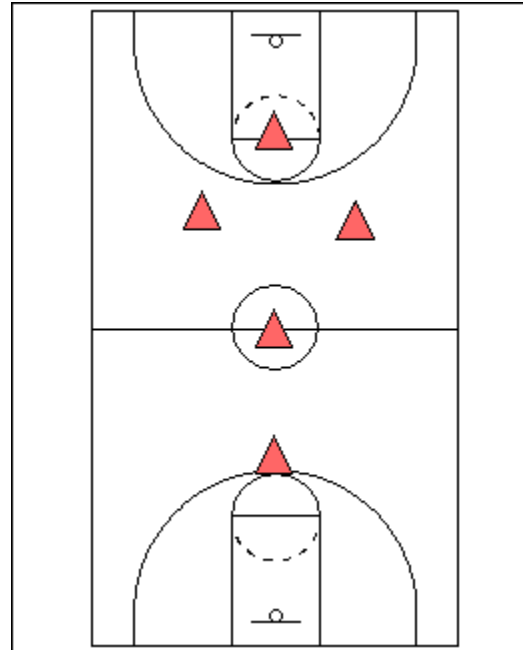
Zone Press

Zone presses can be a little trickier. With a zone press, the defensive players guard an area on the court. This makes it easier for the defense to clog certain areas of the court and apply the double team. Zone pressure can come in almost any formation but the most common formations you'll see are:

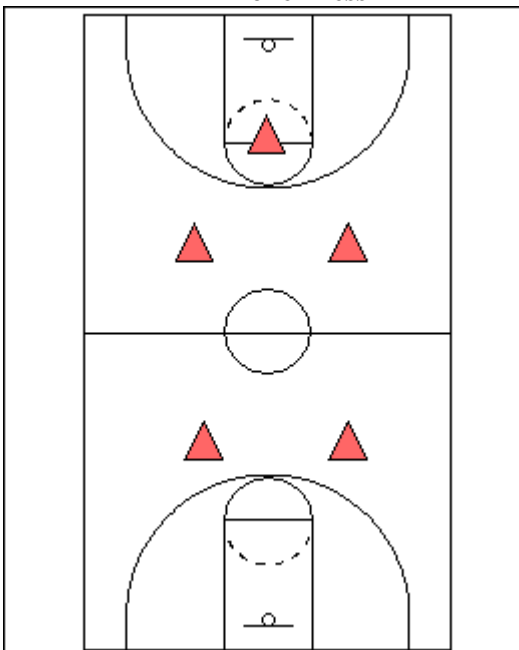
2-2-1 Zone Press



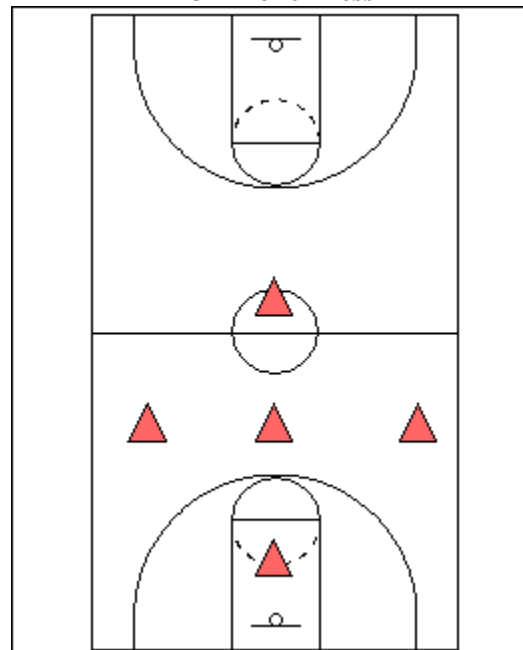
1-2-1-1 Zone Press



1-2-2 Zone Press



1-3-1 Zone Press



In addition, each of the zone formations can be implemented full court, $\frac{3}{4}$ court, and half court. And last but not least, you can see any of these formations as “match up zone presses”.

There are lots of variations. Some coaches will have special plays and strategies depending on the type of press. But to keep things simple we like to use the same basic strategy for all types of “zone presses”. This makes it easier to teach and saves time.

In the components below you will find our basic strategy for handling these presses. It doesn't matter whether you are facing a full court, $\frac{3}{4}$ court, or half court zone press. They are all handled the same way. The only difference is with $\frac{3}{4}$ court and half court press you don't have to worry about getting the ball inbounds.

Here is the strategy for beating the zone press...

How to Break a Zone Press - Key Components

Teams will pressure you for a number of reasons: to create turnovers, control game tempo, or wear down the opposition. Many times they press because they know it will force you to play faster which breaks your rhythm and causes turnovers.

You can avoid the opponents' attempt to create chaos by attacking the pressure in an organized and deliberate way. The following method works against all types of zone presses and allows you attack the defense at your own speed and not the speed dictated by the defense.

Component 1 - Inbound the Ball

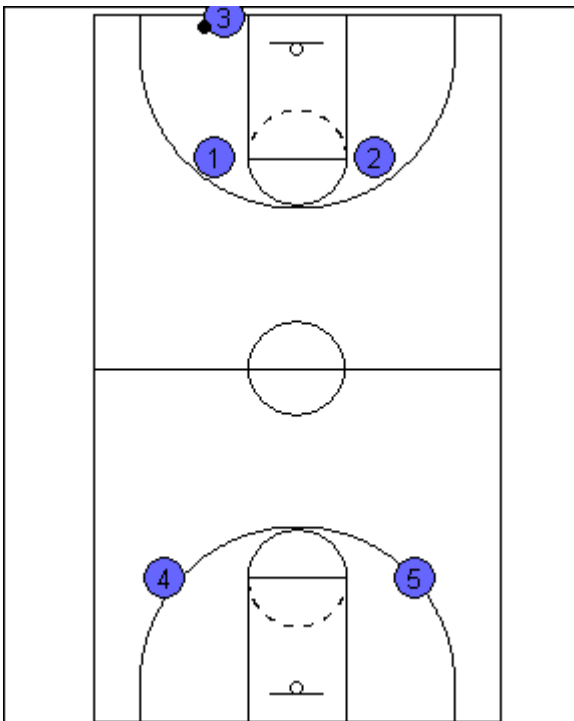
Your first obvious challenge is to inbound the ball. If you're facing a half or $\frac{3}{4}$ press you can skip this step. No problem. However, if you're facing pressure you need to have a strategy to get the ball inbounds.

Teach Players How to Get Open

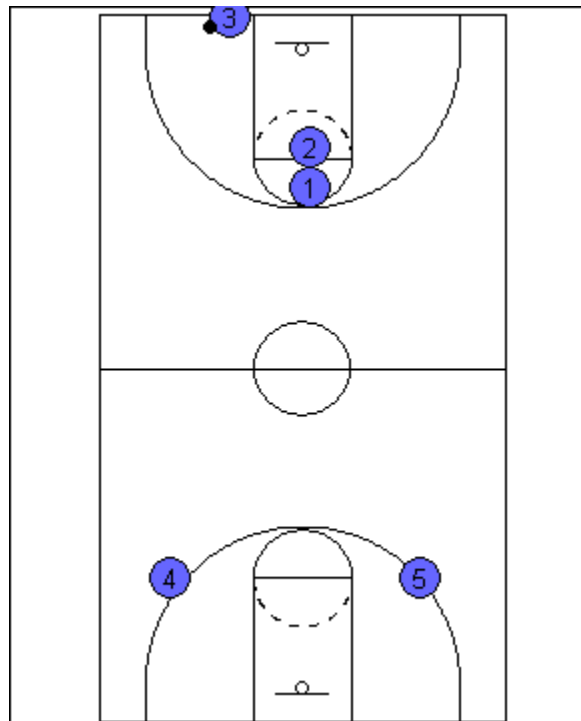
The first and most important strategy is to simply teach players how to get open. We have some very easy and effective ways to get that done.

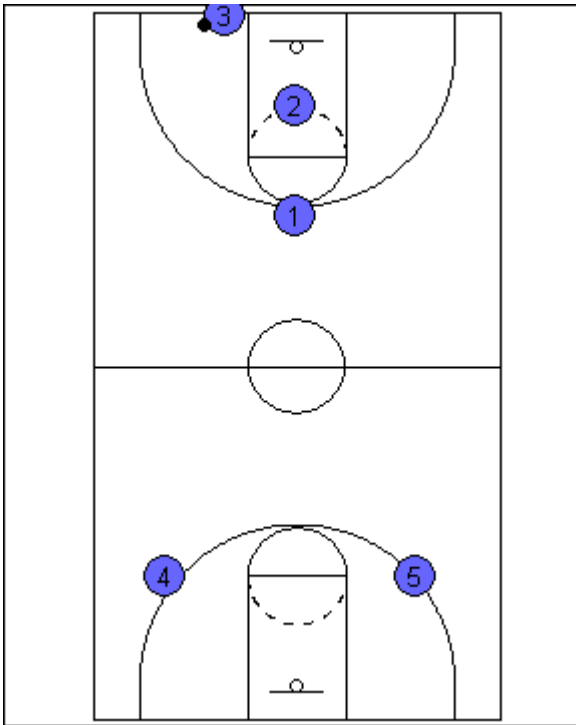
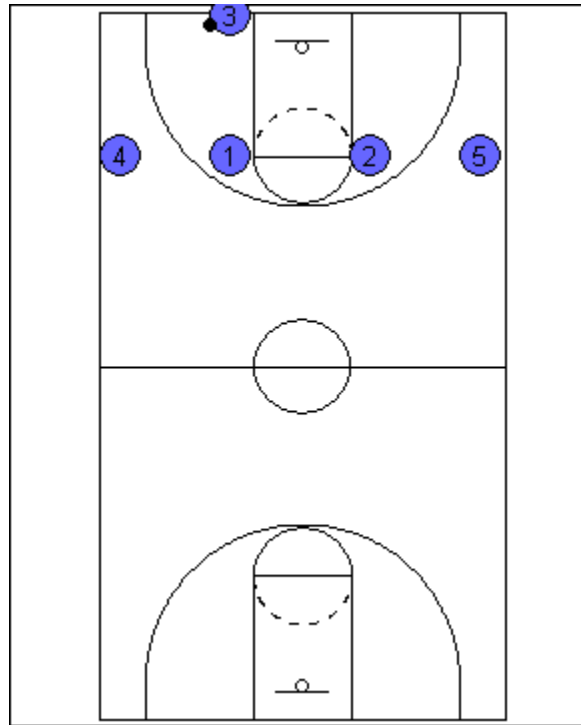
To get started you'll want to show your primary ball-handlers an initial formation. You can use any of the following formations. The one you choose should be based on your situation. They all work and it just depends on your preference, personnel, your fast break, and your overall strategy. The key is to make sure players know where to go, keep non-ball handlers spaced down the court, and use the same formation when teaching the strategies further below.

Formation #1 – Stagger



Formation #2 – Stack



Formation #3 – Wide Stack**Formation #4 – Line**

At this point your primary ball handlers have several options. They can screen for each other, cut straight to the ball, curl cut, fake cut, and so on.

You should pick a couple screens and a couple cuts. Then have your primary ball handlers practice getting open under pressure. It's easiest just to practice 3 on 3.

When cutting and screening, your players can just follow the normal techniques used in your [motion offense](#). If your primary offense is motion, then this will be really easy to teach and you won't need to spend much time on it.

If you use the “stack” formation, you can teach the player signals:

- A tap in the middle of the back means the lower player sets a screen and then rolls the opposite way.
- A tap on the right means the lower player cuts to the right.
- A tap on the left means the lower player cuts to the left.

With all of those options, I have a favorite option that is very effective.

I would say my favorite option is to teach your ballhandlers to block out and use their body to get the ball. If they are guarded one-on-one and use the proper technique, this works every time.

It's just like blocking out for a rebound. The ballhandler positions himself between his defender and the ball. Then he/she pivots, sticks their hips/butt into the defender, and holds them off so the inbounder can

pass the ball. It's important for the guard to hold their hand out so the inbounder has a target. It's also important for the inbounder to pass the ball to the hand that is AWAY from the defense.

This is just like feeding the big man in the post. It's something that needs practiced and you need a good inbounder. When done properly, it's very effective. It always pains me when I see players running all over the place (like a chicken with their head cut off) trying to get open -- when all they have to do is establish position, pin the defender, and hold out their hand.

One more thing. The guard should keep a low and wide base to hold their ground. If they stand up right they could tip over and lose their balance from the contact with the defender.

Distance from Baseline

When catching the ball, it's important that you don't catch too close to the baseline. This is something you might need to watch for and teach your players. If they catch too close to the baseline, they could get trapped and have no place to pass the ball back to. As you'll see in the press breaker below, it's important to always have a player at least 3 feet behind the ball so you can pass to them as a pressure release and for the ball reversal.

Use a Big Man

Another effective technique is to use a really tall player. If you have a really tall player on your team, you can position them close to the inbounder and throw a high pass where no one else can get it. Let the big man jump to catch the ball up high. Then have your primary ballhandlers cut near the big man and run up the court. The big man should be able to outlet to a guard flying up the court and many times it turns into a fast break.

If you have a good tall player, this can be really frustrating and difficult for the defense to guard. Many times they will simply give up.

Using the Line Formation

I really like using the line formation against a team that tries to aggressively deny the pass inbounds. This works against man and zone presses. The reason it works so well is because you bring the big players up too. Many times the big players on the other team are not as mobile and aren't used to denying the inbounds play. In fact, many times the big players won't even try to contest that far up the court. So it's usually pretty easy to get the ball entered to one of your big men near the sideline. Having your players this low also opens up a lot of space to throw over the press.

Here's a play that demonstrated how you could use the line formation:
<http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/plays/linepressbreaker.html>

Inbound Before the Opponent Can Set the Press

This applies after made shots.

Rarely is the other team in position to press right after a made shot, so you might want to get the ball in as quickly as possible.

Drill your teams to do this by situational scrimmaging. It's good for learning to beat the press, and it's also good for getting your team to set up a press in a scramble.

Make sure that your players understand that they can run the entire baseline when inbounding after a made shot, and that, in general, that they avoid inbounding from behind the backboard because it will obstruct some of their passing angles and options.

Getting the ball in quickly after a made shot is actually a good idea almost all the time, not just when being pressed. Lots of times, a team that has just scored will relax slightly, giving your alert team an opportunity to run a sudden fast break for an immediate 'answer.' If you are interested in fast break / transition tips, check out the Danny Miles clinic:

<http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/pr/danny-miles-clinic.html>

Running the Baseline (For Advanced Teams)

After made baskets your inbounder can run the baseline. By giving your players a little coaching, this can be a very effective way to get the ball inbounded more effectively. The reason is that your inbounder can move to get a better more direct passing angle. They can also make pass fakes and change direction to shift the defense. I would consider this an advanced tactic for older players. Younger kids have enough to learn and might run the baseline when they aren't supposed to (thus commit a turnover).

Set Plays

Lastly, you can use set plays to get the ball inbounds. You can use stack plays, line plays, and so on.

Here are a couple plays you can use:

<http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/plays/linepressbreaker.html>

<http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/Plays/CheetahPressBreak.html>

Component 2 - Spacing

Ok, now you have the ball in bounds. What do you do with it?

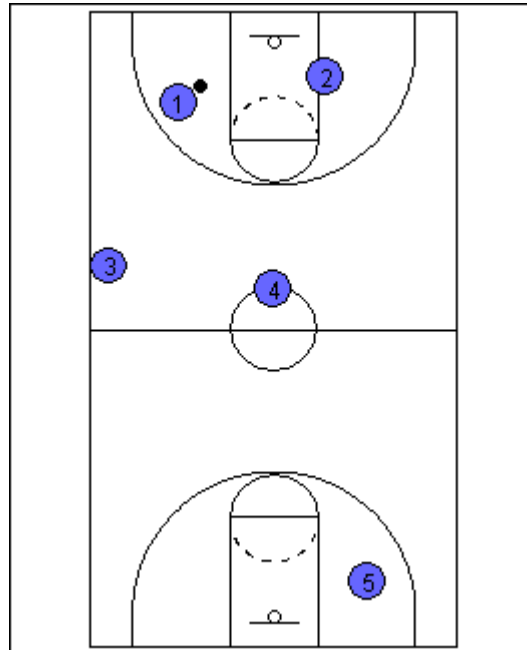
I would say the biggest mistake coaches make when trying to break the press is they neglect proper spacing.

Here is an example of proper spacing and how players should move in reference to the ball:

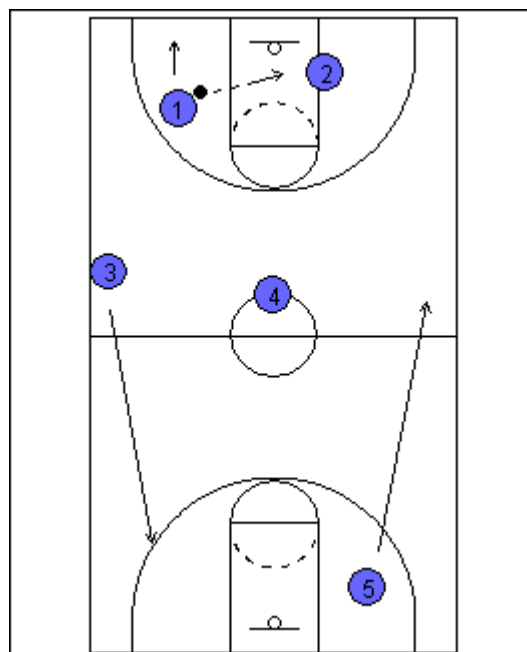
1. In this example the ball was just inbounded. Each player is now spaced out properly to keep the defense stretched out. You'll notice that Player 5 is deep to keep the defenders spread through out the entire court. With a full court press, you have lots of space to work with and it's important to take advantage of all the space that you have.

At this point, Player 1 should look up the court trying to advance the ball. Look for Player 4 in the middle (that's a tough place for the defense to guard). If the ball can't be advanced to a safe area, reverse the ball to Player 2. In this formation, it's very rare for the defense to guard Player 2. This player is almost always open. Make sure you always have a player behind the ball!

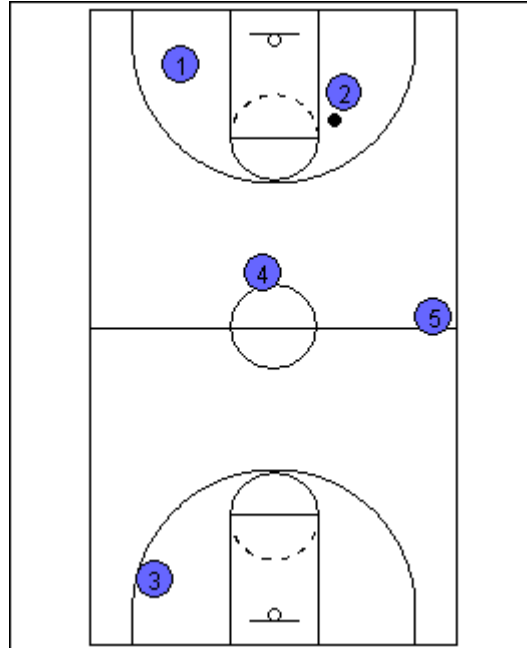
NOTE: The diagram does not show the "exact" place your players will be on the floor. They can move a couple 10 feet in any direction depending on the defense, players' ability, and so on.



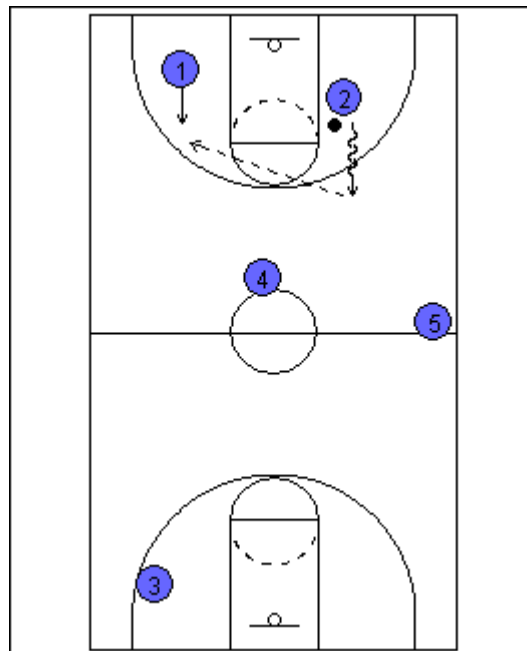
2. As the ball moves, players need to adjust properly. Notice on the reversal how players 3 and 5 shift positions. Also, Player 1 positions himself behind the ball as a safety outlet.



3. Now that the ball has been reversed, the defense has shifted and Player 2 should look up the court to see if they can advance the ball to a safe place. He/she can use the dribble to advance the ball, as long as they don't dribble into a trap. If nothing is available down the court, look to reverse the ball again.

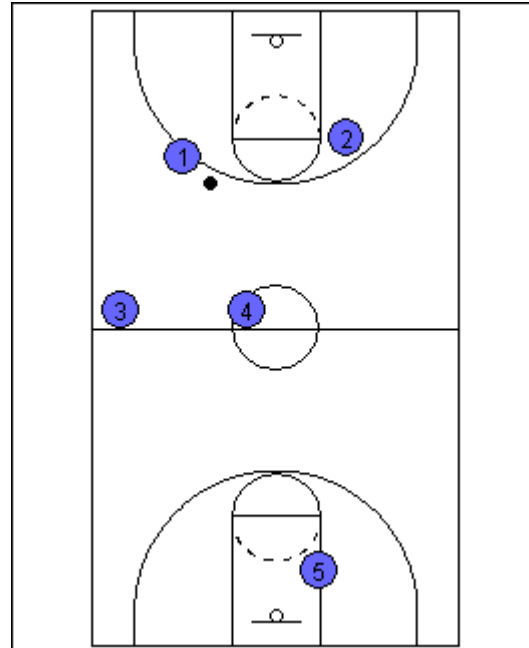


4. As illustrated, Player 2 took a couple dribbles to advance the ball and before the defense could apply the trap, he/she reversed the ball back to Player 1. (Notice how Player 1 moved as the ball was dribbled down the court. Players should maintain their spacing and positioning as the ball moves.)



5. Again, when the ball was reversed, Players 3 and 5 switch positions relative to the ball. Player 1 should look to pass the ball down the court or as a last resort advance the ball with the dribble.

After a few reversals, your players should be able to advance the ball down the court via pass or dribble.

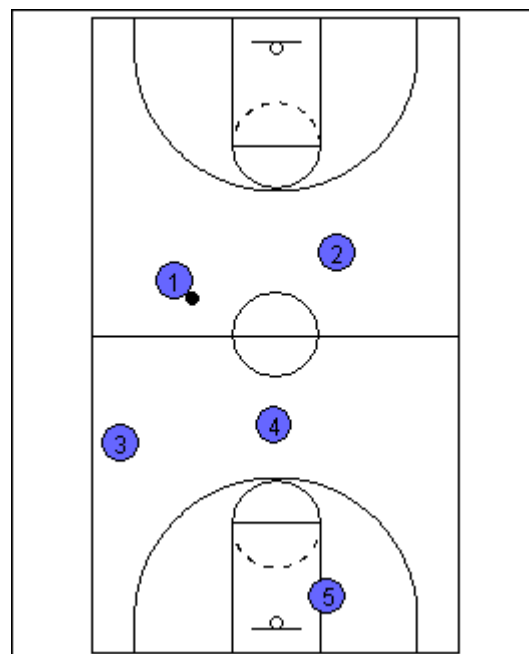


Spacing in a half court trap

The spacing and strategy for the half court trap is exactly the same. In the illustration to the right you can see the initial formation. Just like the previous example, Player 1 can look to advance the ball or reverse it. They keep reversing and probing until they find an opening. The rotations and adjustments are the same as above.

When facing a half court trap, it's important to reverse the ball a few times until you can advance the ball to a safe spot. You might also need your middle player to stay active and find a seam in the defense so they can receive the open pass.

In other words, don't cross half court right away!! You have plenty of time to reverse the ball and/or make a pass fake to shift the defense. You don't want to get caught just past the mid court line. That is a bad place to be.



Component 3 - Reversing the Ball

As you've already seen in the example above, reversing the ball is a big part of breaking a zone press. Once you have the proper spacing established you should start looking to move the ball. Players should always look ahead, but 9 times out of 10, the down-court pass will be covered so you need to reverse the ball a few times to loosen things up.

Your players should be patient. They don't need to force the issue. Take the easy pass to the outlet behind you. Then look to the middle and down the court. If nothing is there, quickly reverse the ball again. Look to advance to a safe spot with the dribble, hit the player in the middle, or look up court.

In essence you are just making the defense move, which causes them to get out of position and momentarily give you seams in the defense.

Another way to move the defense is with **pass fakes**. It's important for players to utilize pass fakes to move the defense and keep them guessing. If your press breaker becomes too predictable it will become easy to guard and you'll turn it over. Mix things up.

Component 4 - Look Ahead

An easy way to beat the press is to simply throw the ball over the top. When you teach the ball reversal technique above, you need to be careful. Sometimes your players will get in the habit of reversing the ball every single time and they forget to look ahead. Once this happens the defense will adapt and take away the reversal and you end up with turnovers.

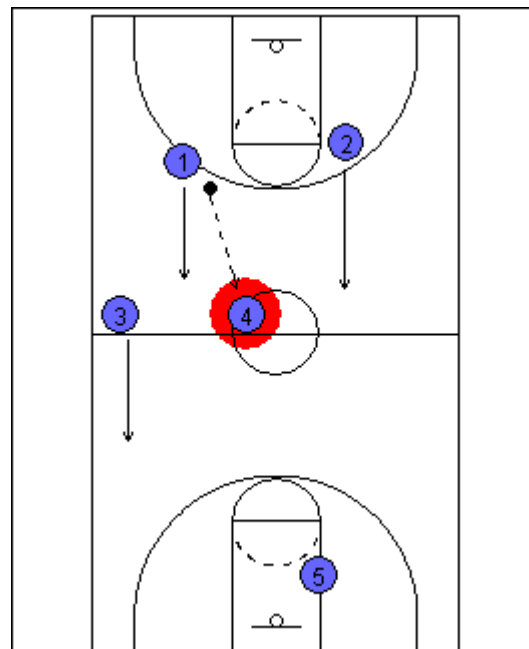
That is why players always need to keep looking ahead. If a player is wide open down the court, throw the ball over the top before the defense can close in and take away your vision. Just make sure it's a high percentage pass and not a "forced" pass that the "defensive safety" can pick off. The player down the court should be WIDE open.

Component 5 - Get the Ball in the Middle

When looking down the court, your players should always check the middle. If this player is open, PASS TO HIM!

Once the ball is in the middle of the court, your ball handlers should be able to run down the court and receive the ball for an easy outlet. Once you get the ball in the middle, the press will be beaten 99% of the time.

The player you put in the middle doesn't need to be a great dribbler, just a great passer. In addition, this player should be moving around trying to get open. They just shouldn't stray far from their middle area (as shown in the spacing in Component 2).



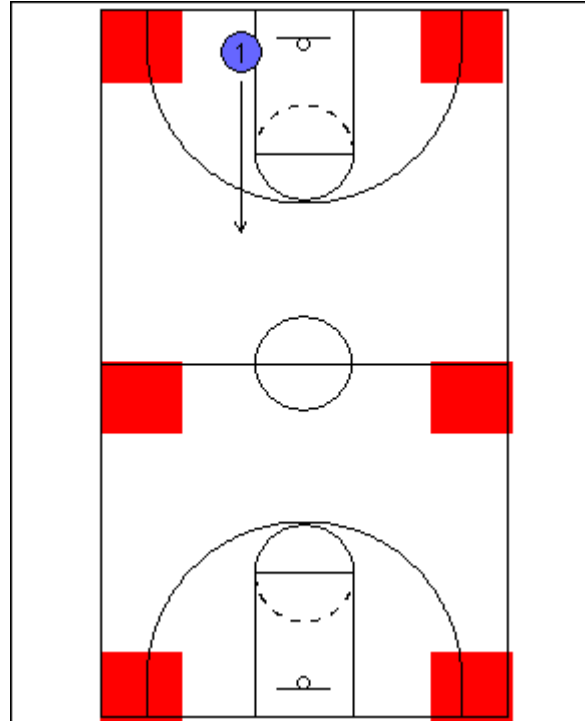
Component 6 - Keep the Ball out of Danger Spots

When advancing the ball, it's CRITICAL to keep the ball out of these danger spots. All your players need to know these spots. They should avoid these areas at all costs and only go in this area as a last resort. You can see the danger areas to the right.

Generally speaking, it's better to keep the ball in the middle of the court and away from the sideline. You should teach your players to dribble and pass to the middle of the court and away from the sideline. Against a good press, they should always be fighting to keep the ball in the middle. But the red areas in the diagram to the right are the most dangerous areas to avoid.

With some practice and game simulation, you can teach your players to anticipate the trap. Many press defenses will look to trap in certain areas, so your team will be able to anticipate when the trap will come.

In any case, it's important to keep your head up and don't walk into a trap. And if you see it coming, try to back dribble until you can pass to an open teammate that's in better position than you. Don't let the defense close in on you.



Component 7 - Score off the Press

NOTE: Beginners or teams struggling to learn these concepts should not be concerned about this component. Trying to do too much will just be overwhelming to them.

Once your team becomes more advanced and skilled at beating the press, you can start to emphasize scoring off the press.

In fact, if you have a fairly capable and experienced group of players, your first step is to convince players early in the year that they should enjoy and look forward to teams that try to pressure you. Because you will take advantage of their gambling and you will get easy opportunities to score.

One of the reasons teams are hurt by pressure is because they only look to break the pressure and not to score against it. In other words, they play not to lose instead of playing to win. They believe they have beaten the press when they get the ball over half court without a turn over or taking a forced shot.

When beating the press, look for an easy basket. It's demoralizing for the defense when they work their tails off and you scoot right down the court for an easy lay up.

If you get pressured and the other team plays out of position, take advantage of that opportunity by scoring. Punish them for trying to press you. Just make sure your players know to only take easy baskets and not force the issue. But if they have an open lane, take the ball to the basket!

Often once you have beaten the defense's initial pressure the game becomes a series of 3-on-2 and 2-on-1 situations. This is when you take advantage and attack.

One thing you'll need to tell your players frequently is to be quick, but don't hurry. It is hurrying that gets players going too fast and into trouble. The defense should react to you. This can be accomplished by attacking their pressure with precise movement and good offensive principles.

To score off pressure effectively, you should run transition drills so players learn how to recognize opportunities and get better at scoring off the run. I suggest running plenty of 3-on-2 and 2-on-1 transition drills.

Rebound When You Attack

One of the great things about attacking a press is that you always have lots of rebounds available. When ever you get in a transition situation where you have the numbers and the defense on their heels, you have very high percentage opportunities for offensive rebounds. So make sure your players are crashing the boards.

Considerations for Your Zone Press Breaker

The alignment above shows the press breaker that we've had great success with. There are many similar variations to this press breaker. Depending on your situation, you might want to use a slight variation. For example, if you are a fast break running team, you want to keep continuity between your fast break and your press breaker alignment. So whether you're facing a press or not, your fast break continues to work seamlessly.

You also want to consider the players that you have in each position. You want a good inbounder that can pass well. You might want your sideline wing players to be good finishers in transition so they can attack and score off the press.

If you are interested in fast break / transition tips, check out the [Danny Miles clinic](http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/pr/danny-miles-clinic.html). It shows you how they developed a high scoring fast break and provides many other great coaching tips. It really is a great clinic and a great value for what you get.

<http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/pr/danny-miles-clinic.html>

Putting It All Together

All this might seem complicated and it might seem like there are lots of options. Yes, this does take a little practice, but it's NOT difficult.

Just remember, the most important things to emphasize are:

- Maintain proper spacing, with a player behind the ball.
- Make the easy pass, don't wait to hit the open player.
- Reverse the ball and look ahead.
- Stay out of danger areas.

Do those 4 things and you'll be in good shape!!

Videos that Show the Alignment and Samples Sequences

Here are some whiteboard videos that show the alignment and movements of the press breaker:

<http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/offense/press-breaker.html>

Drills to Practice this Strategy

To practice this press breaker, I suggest you break it down into segments. For example, to practice inboundng the ball against pressure, you simply run 3 on 3 drills in the half court. You simulate the first part of your press breaker against an all out denial. You can break your team into several groups so everyone can practice at the same time. You'll have an inbounder and two ball handlers set up in the formation of your choice (stack or stagger).

Demonstrate the different ways for your ballhandlers to get open and practice in live situations. Let the defense play in all out man to man denial. As a rule, the inbounder can NOT throw over the top (since they'd normally have two more defenders to worry about).

Practice cuts, screens, and blocking out to get open. Once the ball is advanced successfully, rotate players and restart the drill.

To put everything together you need to run live full court simulations with all the players involved. When first learning the press breaker, you can just run 5 on 0, or 5 on 5 against a dummy defense.

Then when the players are ready, let the defense play live and try to steal the ball.

Eventually you can progress to overload drills. Have your players try to break a defensive press that uses 6 to 10 players. Once you get into a real game, the defense will be much better than you see in practice. That's why overload drills are so effective. That's one of the best ways to simulate what it will really be like when you get in a game.

One more important drill to incorporate. When facing a press, people are constantly running at you trying to deflect the ball. That's why it's important to practice "man in the middle passing drills". You can also progress by putting two defenders in the middle which adds difficulty and simulates a trap. Here's a description of the drill:

<http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/playcreator/view.asp?id=140&type=drill>

Here are a few other drills that will help you handle pressure:

<http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/drills/backupdribbledrill.html>

<http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/drills/full-court-press-breaker-drill.html>

<http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/playcreator/view.asp?id=141&type=drill>

<http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/playcreator/view.asp?id=142&type=drill>

<http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/playcreator/view.asp?id=143&type=drill>

10 More Press Breaker Tips

Here are a Few General Tips When Breaking a Press:

1. Meet the pass. Make sure players meet their pass. If they wait for the ball to come to them, the defense has more time to pick it off.
2. Stay calm. Part of the reason for the press is to get your players anxious and moving faster than they want. Stay calm and control the pace. Don't let the defense dictate the pace for you. And by all means, don't dwell on the last play. Getting angry will only make things worse. Think about the next play.
3. Look up. All too often, players forget to look up.
4. Look before you pass and before you dribble.
5. Make the easy pass. Don't force the issue or wait for something better.
6. Use pass fakes to move the defense.
7. Use quick accurate passes.
8. Use passes to advance the ball quicker. Most teams overuse the dribble.
9. Run the baseline. When inbounding the ball, get a better angle on the pass by running the base line. This angle allows you to throw shorter, quicker, and more accurate passes.
10. Save your dribble -- when ever you receive the ball, catch and face the basket before you do anything!

The BEST Way to Avoid the Full Court Pressure

The best way to avoid pressure is for you to keep them from scoring and then rebound the ball! If your opponent doesn't make any baskets, they can't set up their pressure defense.

By you simply having a great defensive team and a great rebounding team, you will limit the number of times you get pressured. It seems like almost every article we write and product that we produce, it comes back to defense and rebounding being a key.

That is why the first products we developed (and spent so much time on) were about defense and rebounding. Don't neglect your defense and rebounding. They help you in all aspects of the game.

<http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/pr/mandefense.html>

<http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/pr/rebounding.html>

How to Quickly Improve Your Players' Ballhandling Skills

No matter how good you teach the press breaker offense, you still need players that can handle the ball. Unless you have adequate ballhandlers, you're going to struggle no matter what you do.

So developing good ballhandlers might be your first step to beat the press consistently. We won't go into great detail about this topic, but we will give some really good tips and probably the fastest way to develop a good team of ballhandlers.

The Quickest Way to Develop Great Dribbling Ability is by Focusing on 4 Things

You can be an extremely effective dribbler by knowing and practicing 4 things. Most players and coaches make things too complicated. But dribbling effectively is simple. You don't need lots of moves. You just need EFFECTIVE moves.

Here's all you need to know to be effective at any level.

1 - You must be able to dribble the ball down the court at any speed (all the way from walking up to sprinting) with both hands.

Pretty simple, right? You can simply dribble up and down the court at different speeds.

2 - You must be able to change your pace.

It's good to incorporate change of pace in your dribbling drills. Chris Paul is the expert at changing speeds (pace). That allows him to get the defender off balance.

Practice changing the pace from walking, slow, medium, fast, and full speed. You can change the pace from slow to fast, medium to full speed, and any other combinations you can imagine.

3 - You must be able to dribble while moving backwards.

So now instead of going forward, you need to be able to back out of traffic and so on. That's where the back up dribble comes into play. Simply, get in a position where you are protecting the ball and shuffle forwards and backwards up and down the court.

Next, you can practice running forward at a faster speed, come to hockey stop, and shuffle a couple of steps backwards.

Mix it up so you can handle any situation.

4- You must have a primary dribble move and a counter dribble move.

If you perfect a go-to move that's very difficult to stop, good defenders will adjust to stop it. That's when you add your counter move to completely keep the defender guessing.

I prefer the cross over as the primary move and the inside out as the counter move. You might use the hesitation move and the crossover.

That's it! Perfect those four things and when it comes to dribbling, you'll be able to handle almost any situation. Should you also practice other moves? Sure. But I'm telling you, all you really need are the four things above. Those are four extremely effective methods to handle the ball and handle any situation.

You can use the back up dribble all the time -- you use it when approaching a trap, when approaching defensive traffic, when getting cut off in the lane, when breaking the press, when breaking a player down one on one, etc.

You can then incorporate the cross over in lots of situations. If you advance the ball and get cut off you can back up dribble and then cross over to break down your man and blow by him. You can cross over to change directions and bring the ball to the other side of the court. You can cross over to the passing angle to your teammate. You can cross over to eventually set up your counter move (the inside out). So next time instead of crossing over, fake out the defender by giving the inside out move and then blow by the defender.

You still need to practice a lot, but I think this will simplify your life greatly by focusing on really effective dribbling techniques instead of trying to practice all kinds of moves and techniques that don't really help. The techniques above are the most effective dribbling moves that I know.

Next Step -- Drills to Practice Those 4 Things

As a coach it's your job to find drills to practice those 4 aspects of ballhandling. It's also your job to have to use a variety of drills to keep things interesting.

In reality, you are just practicing a few things over and over and over. Players will get tired of practicing their back up dribble all the time, but that's what they need to get better. You solve the boredom problem by using a VARIETY OF DRILLS FOR THE SAME SKILL.

A major enemy of skill development is boredom. The large number of repetitions necessary to improve or learn a skill could lead to routine, mundane sessions. Having multiple drills that work on the same skill and rotating them by workout will go a long way to maintaining interest and enthusiasm. It also exposes players to multiple situations in which he can use the skills he is working on. This creates greater motivation and better workouts.

Here are a few ballhandling drills and articles to help with the 4 critical aspects to dribbling:

<http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/fundamentals/ballhandling.html>

<http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/drills/basketballdrills.html#ballhandlingdrills>

Next step – Work on Passing and Footwork

So now you have quickly developed some players that can dribble the ball effectively. They can dribble with both hands, with their head up, back out of trouble, and see the court...

Now they need to learn how to pass effectively. They also need to be able to pivot and use footwork effectively. You use footwork in all aspects of the game. And when it comes to beating a press you use footwork when you dribble, before you pass, to create space in the trap, to beat a player one of one, and so on.

Here are a few drills and articles to help you improve your team's passing and footwork:

<http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/drills/basketballdrills.html#passingdrills>

<http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/drills/basketballdrills.html#footworkdrills>

<http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/articles/passingsecret.html>

<http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/articles/6passingtips.html>

<http://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/fundamentals/passing.html>

More Resources - Press Breaker DVDs

If you'd like to learn more about breaking pressure and [see on-court demonstrations](#), we have a few DVDs that we recommend.

We found these resources by surveying our own subscriber list and asking them what press break DVDs they thought were the best. We then ordered the DVDs and reviewed them to make sure they were good.

Now in all honesty we have not viewed every press breaker resource available. I'm sure there are other good ones out there. But these are a few that were recommended to us by our subscribers and also get our seal of approval...

DVD Recommendations for Youth Teams

If you're getting pressed in a youth league, my first suggestion is to find a different league. Presses and traps are VERY counterproductive for youth players and slow their skill development. Presses, traps, and zone defenses should be against the rules in youth basketball. If you don't believe me, just listen to pro coach Stan Van Gundy (who also coached his kids' youth team):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZ9jTOAMTtk>

You can also listen to former NBA player and youth basketball expert, Bob Bigelow:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uy6LTXtz-60>

Now if you're stuck facing a press at this level and you just want to get the ball up the court successfully, I recommend these DVDs:

[Universal System of Attacking Press - By Will Rey](#) - I like this DVD because it gives you a really simple and effective press breaker that works against any press. I would start with this DVD because it's very simple and comprehensive. It gives you plenty of good tips and advice.

If you'd like more tips, the next DVD I would suggest is [Mike Krzyzewski: Duke Basketball - Breaking the Press](#). This DVD gives you some additional tips, several good drills, and reinforces important press break concepts. It's a very good all around DVD.

DVD Recommendations for Slow and Moderate Tempo Teams

If you have a team that likes to walk the ball up the court or a moderate tempo team that will run when the opportunity presents itself, then I would suggest these DVDs:

[Universal System of Attacking Press - By Will Rey](#) - Coach Rey considers his squad to be a moderate tempo team. They will run -- but they do so in a deliberate manner and that is not their primary means of offense. In this DVD Coach Rey presents his press breaker, which is very effective and easy to learn. You'll pick up lots of good advice and I think this is an all around good DVD.

[Mike Krzyzewski: Duke Basketball - Breaking the Press](#) - This is another good all around DVD that will give you additional tips, drills, and concepts to consider.

DVD Recommendations for Uptempo Fast Break Teams

If your team likes to push the ball aggressively and the fast break is a very important component for you, I would consider these DVDs:

[Bill Self Breaking Presses with a 1-3-1 Alignment](#) - This DVD offers some really effective tactics to push the ball and punish the press. However it's a little more complicated than the others. It's great for an experienced or more advanced team. They use a press break that is similar to what we teach in this report, however they use a little more advanced pattern that incorporates movement, which is great for attacking.

[Mike Krzyzewski: Duke Basketball - Breaking the Press](#) - Whether you run or walk the ball up the court, this is just a good all around DVD that will give you additional tips, drills, and concepts to consider.

DVD Recommendations for Teams with Skilled Dribblers (Or Run the Dribble Drive Motion Offense)

If you have a team that has lots of players that can really dribble the ball and penetrate, you might want to consider this DVD. It's also something that the dribble drive motion coaches might want to consider because it complements the "dribble drive" concept.

[Tom Pecora: Advantage Offense: Success Vs Any Pressure Defense](#) - This DVD is unique because it emphasizes the dribble. It's a good DVD for teams with good ballhandlers. Coach Pecora is an excellent presenter and does a great job of teaching and explaining all the concepts. The entire DVD is filled with fundamental coaching techniques and tactics that I think you'll like. Any coach, no matter how much experience, will pick something up from this DVD.

Give Us Your Feedback

We really hope this report helps you successfully beat pressure and avoid turnovers.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions to improve this report, please leave comments on our [website](#) or email us at info@breakthroughbasketball.com