

## Seven Principles of passing

(From the Hawkes Bay Basketball Coaches Manual courtesy of Shawn Dennis)

The first objective of running a sound offence is mastering the fundamentals. In order to accomplish this it is imperative that the following basic principles of passing be observed:

- 1. The distance between the passer and his defensive man should be small not more than 1 metre and preferably less.**

The offensive player must have poise and confidence in his ball handling ability. He must realize that it is practically impossible for the defensive man to take the ball away from him as long as he maintains his poise. The closer the defensive man plays, the less time he has to react to the passer's actions—providing the passer recognizes what the defence is doing. This principle of good passing is violated more than any other.

- 2. Eliminate all unnecessary movements in ball handling and passing.**

Avoid slow winding-up actions. Eliminate stepping with the pass; use quick wrist and finger action on all passes. Cut the action of the pass off, or as short as possible.

- 3. See our passing lane and your receiver**

See our passing lane and your receiver but do not look at him unless your pass is preceded by an effective fake. Do not make blind passes, but avoid turning to face a receiver. This is a telegraphing action. See the intended receiver by the use of split vision. There is a big difference between seeing and looking.

- 4. Use fakes only for a purpose.**

Do not fake just to be faking. Make fakes positive, and for a purpose. The player, who fakes excessively, moving the ball constantly, is unable to determine what the defensive man is doing with his hands. He can not see, the passing lane and it is impossible for him to make an accurate pass to his team mates because he has lost his poise. Size up your opponent's hands and pass quickly away from them. The "halo" around a defensive man's head offers a passer a good passing zone.

- 5. Pass to the open side.**

This is a principle that is frequently violated, even by experienced players. This could be the result of the passer's inability to see not only his own defensive man, but the passing lane and the defensive men playing the receiver. It becomes a question of recognition, realizing what the defence is doing, and then doing the opposite. The receiver also has some responsibilities. He must "shape up" in such a manner that he presents a good target. He must keep the defensive man away from the passing lane by maintaining a relative position between the ball and the defence, once the pass is made, and he must play the ball as it comes into reach.

- 6. Pass the ball**

Do not massage the basketball. The ability to make a good quick pass to an open team mate is of utmost importance. Players must learn that a good basketball player can receive a pass from a team mate and make his play (a pass, a shot, a fake and drive, or a pass and cut) within three seconds it takes him to successfully execute the play, the better basketball player he becomes. For every second over three seconds, the poorer one he becomes. The ball has to be moved. Moving the ball keeps the defence occupied, thereby creating passing lanes and scoring opportunities. Watch any outstanding team play the game, and you will see a team that has learned the importance of this passing principle.

- 7. Anticipate when you may receive the ball and develop enough basketball intuition to know beforehand the best places to pass the ball.**

The outstanding basketball player has this instinct. This is why some professional teams are effective even though they appear to have very little definite team pattern. The players are of such outstanding calibre that very little team pattern is needed to create scoring opportunities. The outstanding players are those who have

learned to play without the ball, as well as with the ball. They control their defensive men, thereby keeping them occupied and out of the play. The better the player, the less team offensive pattern required to create good scoring opportunities. Unless the players have this ability, *it* is necessary to devise a team offensive pattern which affords the players the means of keeping the defence occupied. -

If the defence does not remain concerned, then the offensive player becomes a definite scoring threat through the medium of the offence.

If these seven basic passing principles are taught and stressed, the offensive pattern has an excellent chance for success - regardless of what used. The ability to execute a successful pass is a pre-requisite to all effective offensive basketball.

Basic passes include the chest pass, bounce pass, overhead pass, sidarm pass, baseball pass, and behind-the-back pass. Practice each type of pass to make these fundamental passes automatic. Players must then learn to apply the correct pass for different court situations. They can practice with a partner or by individually to develop quickness and accuracy in passing. For practicing alone, you need a ball and a flat wall or toss back.

Learning decision making in passing is gained through practicing in competitive group drills and game situations.