

• BACK OF BASKETBALL

Shifting Zone Defense Necessitates High Degree of Teamwork on Hardwood

Seventh of 20 instructive basketball articles by famous coaches.

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BY PHOG ALLEN
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THE common conception of teamwork in basketball is that it applies only to offense, but in reality it operates best on defense—zone style—which, at Kansas, is a simple transition from man-to-man according to situations which might develop—namely, when the defense is outnumbered. (One defensive man opposed by two offensive; two defensive by three offensive, etc.)

When a defense is not outnumbered it should be stronger than the offense, but where it is outnumbered it should expect the offense to shoot.

We strive for an economy of defense, conserving our forces near the basket, yet we project our defensive tentacles in all directions.



Phog Allen

We pick our offensive opponents at the start of the game and then switch as the situation develops. The two defensive forwards play a man-to-man while the center and guards form a triangle. When they outnumber our defensive setup we play the zone principle, ready to shift to a man-to-man when the tension eases.

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IN brief we play a man-to-man on any offensive player who has the ball ready to shoot. Somebody must cover him. While the offense is setting up their chance at a basket we go into the zone, which has the two forwards in a

parallel line out front in scoring territory, the guards in a line near the basket, and the center at a spot near the foul line, forming a triangle with the two guards.

The most vulnerable positions of the attack are situated where the three men form the triangle. These three men range outward or backward conjointly and coordinately as the offensive situation indicates.

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THEY know the offensive men near the basket create the most perilous situation and concentrate on them, yelling, stomping, and waving their arms menacingly, attempting to force a bad pass, or cause an offensive player to fumble.

This closely knit unit, which always moves in the direction in which the ball has been passed, often is so successful that the offense finds it extremely difficult to work the ball close enough for a good shot.

The defense forces the offense to take shots from farther out, and then, because they work so much in harmony, the three men forming the triangle swing back to the basket for rebound work and usually are in the best position to get the ball off the backboard.

NEXT: Penetrating the zone defense, by Roy Mundorff of Georgia Tech.

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