

## ZONE OR MAN-TO-MAN

### DEFENCE--WHICH?

Perhaps the most mooted point in the discussion of efficient defensive basketball is whether a team can be more consistently successful by employing the zone defense or the man-to-man defense. Theoretically, the zone defense can be used without the same danger of fouling that is so apparent and so costly in the man-to-man defensive game.

The rules emphatically state that a player on defense shall play the ball and not the man. When a player on defense has been instructed by his coach to "hound" the opposing star and literally "ride him to death," it means that in this type of game, the man-to-man defense, there will be much contact and perhaps combat.

The zone game is an energy saver. The man-to-man game is an energy destroyer. The difficulty with most coaches in using the zone game is that they have trouble with their transitional zones. In other words, when two or sometimes three men on the offense assemble in a certain zone the coach often has difficulty in shifting his defense from the other zones into the danger zone without leaving a vulnerable spot open to attack.

The fourth principle of war is the principle of the economy of force. The zone defensive game is the very embodiment of this principle of the economy of force. In a highly organized unit, such as a basketball team, many coaches have difficulty in shifting their power with simplicity and at the same time maintaining security. I believe that this can be done in the zone defensive game. Coaches generally accept the set five-man, two-line defense as the orthodox defense of the day. This defense embodies both the man-to-man defense and the zone defensive game.

The plan of the man-to-man style of play is that the two guards will pick up the first two men through on offense. When the other men on offense go through, the front-line defensive man will pick them up and stay with them until a shot is made or the offense loses the ball.

In the zone game the plan is very different. The two guards should be placed seven feet from the end line and seven feet from the rim of the basket. On their initial move, these men should operate defensively seven feet in any direction, forward, laterally and backward, as conditions warrant. They should actually cover a fourteen-foot zone by shifting in any and all directions.

In the accompanying diagram, number 1, I shall present this zone defense as follows:

Draw two circles, fourteen feet in diameter, and use each of your guards as the center of his respective circle. For the forwards, draw two circles of the same size, and the centers of which are seven feet from each side line and twenty-five feet from the end line. For the center position draw a circle of the same diameter, between the two forwards' positions. You will readily see that each man forms the center of his respective circle.