

# How to Combat a Pressing Defense

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THE first thing to do to combat a pressing defense is to build up individual cleverness. This can be done through a series of special exercises upon which we spend hours every month.

All players must learn to fake one way and go another. They must fake forward, sideward, backward, and in all directions. They must learn to fake one, two, three, and even four times if necessary. Fakes may be made with the entire body or with parts of the body.

After the ball has been thrown in court to the player who is loose, the one receiving the ball must dribble low to control the ball. He must dart one way and drive another, one, two, or three times depending upon success. As he darts and drives to get around the defensive forward, the forward may back up. If he does, the guard will easily, and soon, get the ball past the middle of the floor. The dribbler with the ball may body-fake and feint to make his job more easy.

In order to teach the aforementioned fundamentals, we line up the players the length of the floor one against one, as shown in Diagram 1, to practice these stunts. O is on defense; X has the ball. X dribbles the length of the floor. O on defense tries to stop him.

In Diagram 2, we have an exercise in which we practice getting loose from our opponents. This exercise may be practiced on either side or in the middle of the floor. X1 passes to X2 after X2 jockeys and feints to get loose from O who guards him. O is on defense and attempts to

keep X2 covered.

After the fundamentals mentioned have been learned, most any set-up will be successful in bringing the ball down the floor.

In Diagram 3, the guard passes in to his companion guard and rushes down the floor, receiving a return pass. This places four on three for a scoring situation. X1 passes to X2 who return-passes to X1 who drives down the floor rapidly.

In Diagram 4, the guard passes to the companion guard, and each guard blocks for each other until the ball gets across the middle of the floor. With the guard in possession of the ball, all players advance

down the floor as rapidly as he progresses and proportionately. X1 passes to X2. X1 screens for X2 who keeps the ball, getting it across the middle.

Diagram 5 shows what to do if a guard cannot get loose. He screens for the forward while he gets open to receive the ball, and bring it down the floor. X1 fakes a pass to X2 but passes to X3 after X2 screens the guard of X3. X2 then goes down in the forward position.

Diagram 6 shows that, if the guard and forward are both held up, they screen for the last forward who receives the ball and bring it down. X1 fake-passes to X2, who screens X3's guard. X3 comes up to get the pass but screens for X4. X1 passes to X4. X4 and X1 bring the ball down. X2 and X3 take corner forward positions.

If both forwards and the guard are screened off, the center fakes and cuts to receive the ball as a last resort only. He then brings the ball down the floor or returns it to the guard to bring it down as shown in Diagram 7. X1 fake-passes to X2 who screens X3's guard. X3 comes over and screens X4's guard. X4 screens X5's guard. X1 passes to X5. X5 and X1 work together getting the ball across the middle.

As soon as the players get past the middle, they then set up the regular offensive maneuvers or drive in, if open, for a drive-in shot. The guard throwing in the ball from out of bounds must be careful not to pass in the ball to his companion under the opponent's basket where inter-

