

Offensive Building Blocks

Regardless of what offense is used, basketball offenses are made up of common simple “offensive building blocks.” These simple components of offense are made up of three player and two player building blocks. Teaching players how to execute these simple offensive building blocks allows them to learn how to play the game of basketball instead of running plays.

One of the best offensive building blocks that players can be taught is to “drive against the grain.” **Diagram One** depicts a common offensive maneuver. Player O1 cuts to the top of the key to receive a pass from O2. X1, the defender, will exert considerable effort to either deny the pass to the middle or to be in position to prevent a penetrating drive by O1.

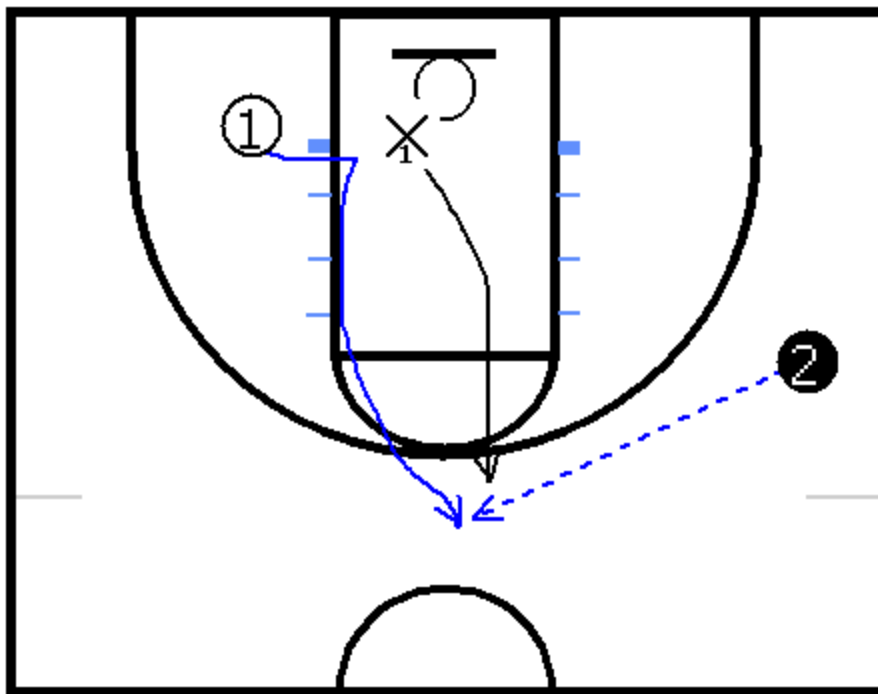


Diagram One

The natural instinct for most offensive players is to continue in the direction of their forward momentum. As shown in **Diagram Two**, O1 continues in the direction of the original cut. This allows the defender X1 to successfully defend the initial penetration of O1. In large part, this is because X1’s momentum is moving in the same direction as O1’s.

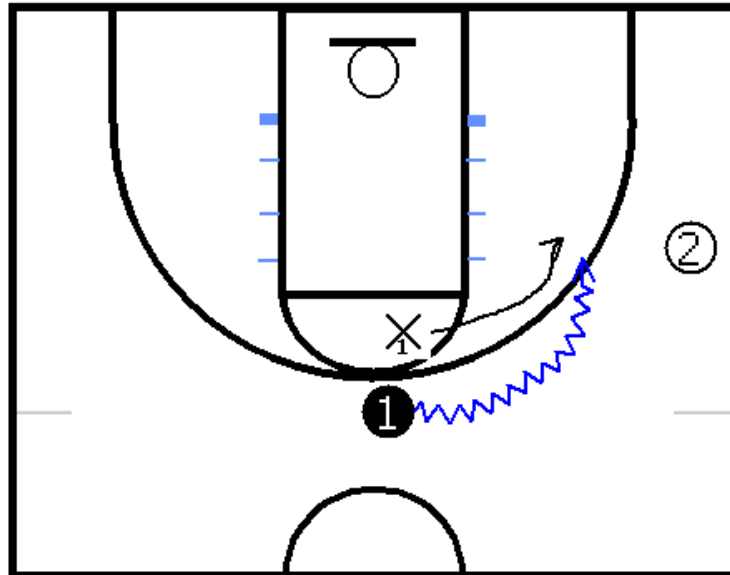


Diagram Two

O1 has been stopped from penetrating deep into the lane area by X1. The only way O1 would be able to beat X1 in this example is if O1 is significantly faster than X1 or X1 was in poor defensive position when O1 received the pass from O2.

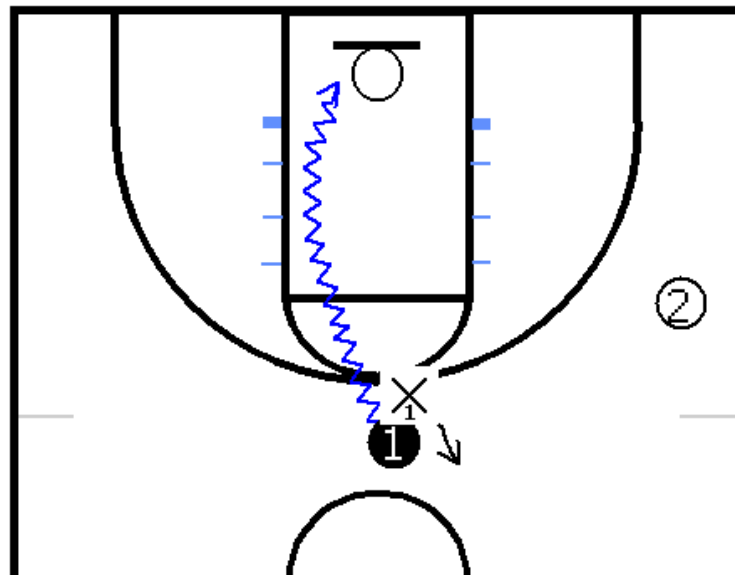


Diagram Three

In **Diagram Three** O1 “drives against the grain” for a scoring or a passing opportunity. X1, despite an excellent defensive effort is not able to stop O1’s penetration. Note that X1 is still moving in the direction of the cut made to defend O1. For the purpose of this example, this has been exaggerated somewhat. Often, all that is needed for O1 to beat X1 off the dribble is the split second that it takes for X1 to stop his or her forward momentum and begin to move in the direction of O1’s penetrating drive.

The key to making this offensive move work is for O1 to execute a “jump catch” and land facing the basket in triple threat. A “jump catch” is a technique used to catch a ball with both feet in the air and land facing the basket in triple threat position. By using this technique the offensive player has the advantage of not having established a pivot foot. Dropping the buttocks two inches upon landing will eliminate all of the forward momentum, giving the offensive player neutral equilibrium.

The offensive player can either execute a crossover drive or a two inch shot fake combined with a crossover drive. In order to successfully drive past a defender all that is needed is for the defender to freeze for just a second. This is all the prepared offensive player will need to drive past the defender, even a quicker defender.

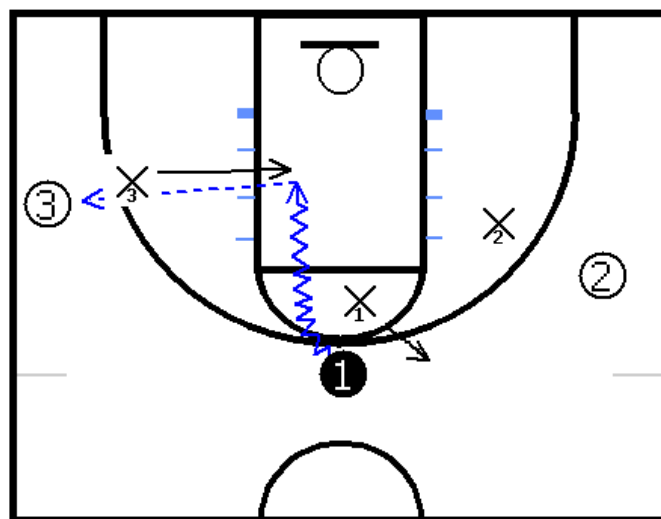


Diagram Four

Diagram Four depicts how driving against the grain can create a scoring opportunity for a teammate. In this example, O1’s penetration sets up a penetrate and pitch creating a shot opportunity for O3.

Regardless of what offense used, this is an example of how getting out of the offense with a simple fundamental technique combined with an offensive building block allows players to be creative and effective on offense. Coaches should never forget that the purpose of an offense is to create scoring opportunities. This is just one example of how players can use an offense to create a scoring opportunity by getting out of the offense.

This handout is an excerpt from the book: ***Offensive Building Blocks*** – available on Amazon.com

