130 Winning Special Situations

This document contains 13 sample ideas from the Coaching Toolbox's eBook

"130 Winning Special Situations"

20 **Automatic Situations.** There are some situations that we call AUTOMATIC SITUATIONS. We make these decisions at the start of the season based on our philosophy and our players' skills. We teach them to the players and then practice them frequently so that they become reactions. Automatic Situations eliminate decisions players have to make under pressure. They also eliminate confusion in communication. I remind players of our automatics during the game, but it is not something they are hearing for the first time. During the course of this e-book, I have noted which situations are automatic and do not have to be called as **AUTOMATIC**.

21 **Coach's Call Situations.** I have also noted which situations are not automatic for the players and will be called from the bench. It is important that your players know the difference between the two. I have denoted these situations in the remainder of the book as **COACH'S CALL**

28 **Shortening the game.** There are times when it is to your advantage to shorten the game, even if you are not in the lead. There have been times when I have held the ball early in the game (no shot clock) even when we were behind.

I have two ways to shorten the game. One is by running our normal offense, but calling "4" (no shots other than layups), or I can run our delay game. In this case, we would call "attack 4" meaning that we are looking to get backdoor layups and drives for layups out of our delay set. Here are three situations to consider taking time off the clock: **COACH'S CALL**

> #1 To combat foul trouble if you do not have a shot clock and don't have a lot of depth. Take time off the clock while your best players or scorers are on the bench to keep your opponent from having the advantage of you playing without your best players.

> #2 If your team is playing too fast. I can think of two occassions that we had dug ourselves a double digit deficit in the first half by playing too fast. In both cases, my attempt to get the pace more to our advantage was to go into our delay and attack 4. One of the games we came back to win, the other we lost in triple overtime to an athletically superior opponent.

#3 You are playing an opponent whose style of play is a much faster tempo than yours. You can use the "Milk a Minute" concept in #72 of this ebook at any time during the game. When I know that we are going to play that way against a particular opponent, we put 30 seconds on the clock for each possession in the practices leading up to the game. We run nothing but a layup (our call is "4") until the horn sounds signaling that the 30 seconds has expired, then run our normal offense. That simulates what we need to do on game night. In these types of games, the football stat "Time of Possession" applies.

30 **Inbound ball in dead corners full court.** The diagram at the right shows a play to run to get the ball in if you have to go full court and are being pressed on a dead corner spot inbound. This is a situation that does not come up very often, but as Murphy's Law tells us--if you aren't prepared, it will definitely happen at the end of tight game. I am not implying that this is the only play to run. I am saying that you need to have a play that works for your personnel. **AUTOMATIC**

48 **Break away layups.** Giving up layups in transition hurts on the scoreboard, but it hurts in other ways too. For one thing, it is a huge momentum shifter away from your team and to your opponent.

One way to throw even more momentum their way is by making the mistake of giving up a conventional three point play with a basket and a free throw.

It is instinctive that players want to try to block a layup by swinging at the ball which almost always leads to a foul. It is critical to teach your players to not allow the three point play.

My belief is either to let the layup go or to foul in a way (never by being dirty or being called intentional) that they can't get the shot off and must make two free throws.

The only way that I can tolerate giving up a basket and a foul is when our player is attempting to draw a charge and is called for blocking. That I can live with because if we get the call that takes away a transition basket from them, that is a huge momentum shifter our way. **AUTOMATIC**

52 **Force the ball to the sideline in defensive conversion at the end of the quarter.** We force the ball to the sidelines in conversion defense and in the half court as well with less than five seconds to go in the quarter. That will lessen the likelihood of a player banking in a long shot if their momentum is going sideways rather than head on. It also gives us a better idea of where the rebound will go. The percentages show that it will rebound on the opposite side from where it was shot most frequently. **AUTOMATIC**

"Take as many situations as possible out of thought processes and turn them into quick reactions requiring no thought at all."

Dick Divinzio
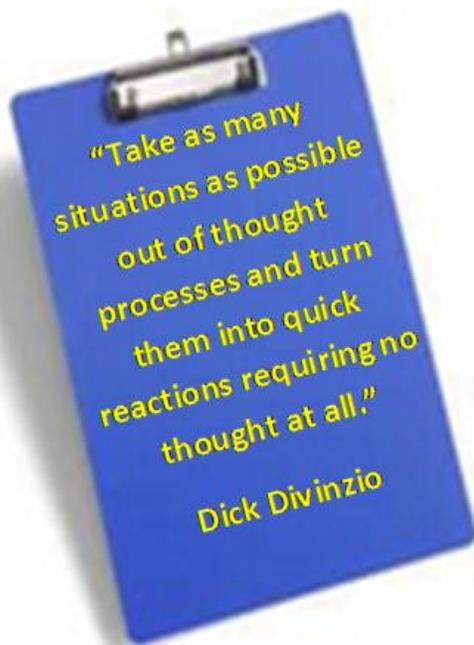
**56** **Last shot of quarter play vs. 2-3 zone.** Here is the play that I like to run at the end of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd quarters against a 2-3 zone. I call it overload. **AUTOMATIC**

There are four parts to the diagram. Parts 2-4 is on the next page.
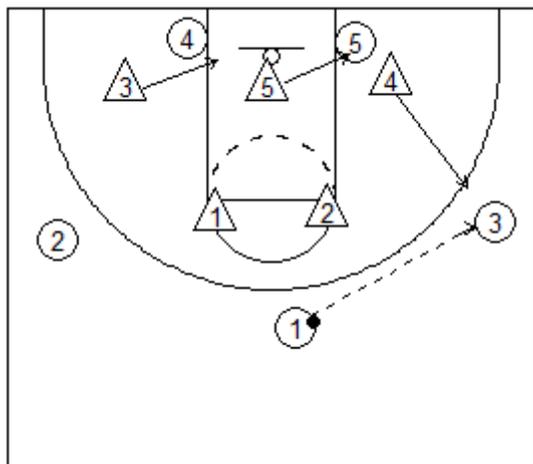
#1 passes to #3 to shift the defense.
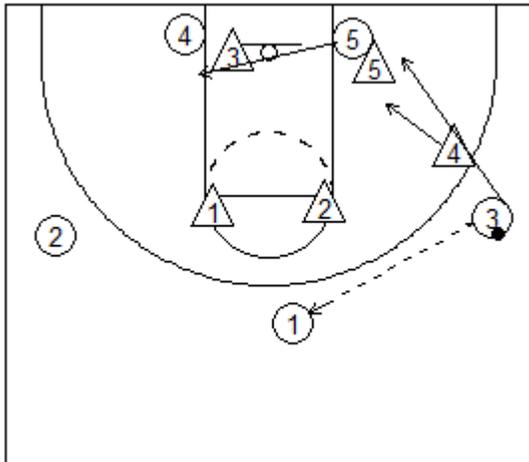
#3 passes back to #1 and cuts toward the basket

#5 slides over on top of #4
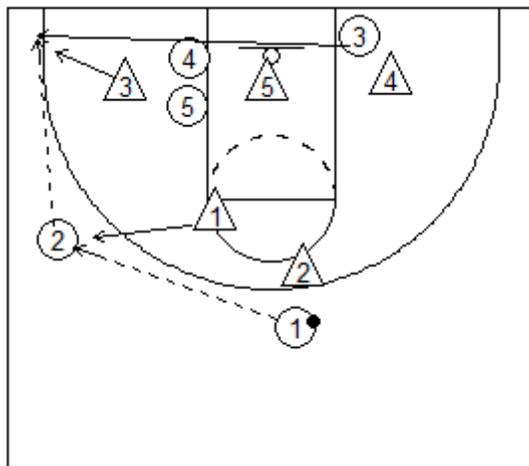
#3 continues his cut to the corner.

As the cut is taking place, #1 reverses the ball to #2

#2 passes to #3 as he arrives in the corner
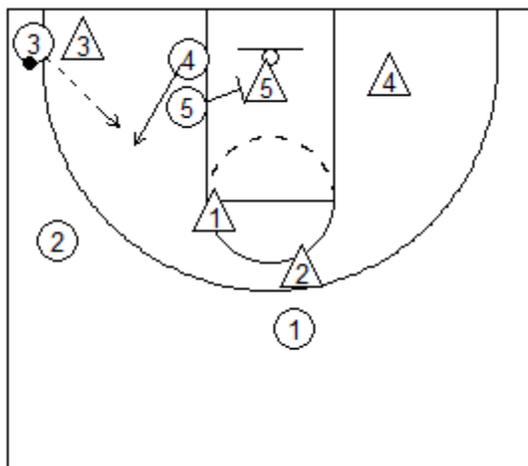
#5 screens the middle defender in the zone to allow 4 to pop to a 12 foot 45 degree cut

#3 passes to #4 for the shot

67 **When do you put one of your best players back in with 4 fouls?** The traditional thinking is that a coach should remove a player, particularly if that player is one of the team's best players; when he or she is 1 foul from fouling out of the game. The coach's decisions then become, "When do I put the player back in the game for good?" or "Do I substitute on offense and defense to try to get some use out of the player."

I have always felt that it is better to put a player back in too soon and have him foul out than to keep him on the bench too long and feel (after the game is over) that I should have put him back in sooner. If he fouls out, then at least I know that I got every second out of him that I could have. If he finishes up with four fouls, then I wonder how much more time he could have played before fouling out rather than wasting on the bench.

A study analyzed approximately 5000 NBA games from 2006 to 2010. (The source of the study is the book "Scorecasting.")

The study used the plus/minus statistic (How much did the team win or lose by when that player was in the game. If the team outscored the opponent by 9 points while that player was in, the player's plus/minus score is +9) to determine the value of a player to his team. "Non-star" players had an average plus/minus of 2 points lower in 4th quarter of a game than during the 1st quarter of a game.

"Star" players (Made the All Star Team or All NBA team), plus/minus rating is only .17 points lower in the 4th quarter than in the 1st quarter.

Comparing "stars" (minus .17 plus/minus in the 4th quarter) to "non-stars" (minus 2.0 plus/minus points in the 4th quarter), it is clear that replacing a star with a non-star is definitely puts that team at a disadvantage.

The argument can be made that if a player fouls out, he or she is not around for the last plays of the game. My philosophy is that every possession of the game should be valued in the same way that the last possession is. I would rather have my best players for three quarters of the possessions in the fourth quarter (example 24 of the 32 possessions counting both offensive and defensive possessions) and not for the last play than for 12 of the 32 possessions and have him for the last play.

Two other pieces of data from the Scorecasting study are that: 1) A player with five fouls, will foul out 21% of the time in the NBA. 2) Leaving a "star" player with 5 fouls in the game rather than putting him on the bench improve the team's chances of winning by 12%. So, you have pretty good odds that a player will not foul out and you are improving your chances of winning by leaving him or her in the game.

Some coaches feel that when leaving a player in the game with four fouls they might not play hard on defense. Our expectation for the entire game is that "Players who do not play defense do not play." Anytime a player is not playing defense, regardless of how many fouls he has, he is going to come out of the game.

WINNING WORDS

"Sometimes coaches foul their own players out by keeping them on the bench too long.

Jeff Van Gundy

Yes, you can occasionally get a bad call that puts a player's 5th foul on him. I teach that a bad call on the 5th foul is almost never the reason for a player to foul out. It is usually the silly fouls that he picked up earlier in the game that put him in foul trouble. Reaching fouls, over the back with no position and no chance at the rebound, driving out of control, fouling a jump shooter, and other needless fouls are what players need to eliminate. Then, an occasional bad call is not going to cost them and their team.

One other type of foul that I want our best players to steer clear of is fouling to stop a breakaway layup. The two points he surrenders by not contesting the layup are much less costly to our team than him getting one foul closer to disqualification. **COACH'S CALL**

72 **Milk a Minute.** Have a system where you can milk a lead without going into a full blown delay. Our goal when we go to this is to run a minute off the clock without the other team adjusting to what we are doing. Sometimes if you are just running your offense and it appears that you just can't get a shot, you can run some clock before your opponent is able to adjust with more defensive pressure or trapping. Have a call or signal for nothing but a wide open layup within your normal offense or run a continuity that doesn't lead to shot opportunities. I call the name of the set to run and "4." **COACH'S CALL**

76 **Miss a free throw on purpose needing to score.** I play this differently than if we are ahead because we are looking for a different type of rebound than missing on purpose when ahead. We use this if we have one shot and are behind by two or three points with less than 4.0 second to go. In this case, the way I want to play it is to have the shooter shoot the ball hard off the front of the rim as soon as he receives the ball from the official. Our hope is to catch the other team off guard and not ready to block out. If you have a timeout you can call timeout it if you get the ball in the scramble for the rebound, or if you need a three point shot and don't have enough time to throw it out on the rebound. Remind the shooter to stay behind the line until the ball hits the rim. **COACH'S CALL**

86 **Plant the seed.** In the last two minutes when you are being pressed and have the lead, prior to inbounding the ball, let the officials know that you are going to watch the clock and will call timeout if the 10 second count gets to 8. By planting that thought in their minds, the officials are expecting your timeout and are less likely to give you a "quick" 10 call knowing that you are on top of the situation. **COACH'S CALL**

99 **Players "Coach" in practice.** To get players thinking strategically in practice, at times, I name one of the players as the "coach" during the situations segment of practice. I rotate it so that each player is the coach at some point during the season. My purpose is to make them think more deeply than they would as a player.

Their requirements as the coach are that they are only a strategic coach. They cannot correct or get on a teammate or an official (our coaching staff are the officials). The second requirement is that they must execute the end of the game as we do. In other words, no playing defenses that we don't use, no drawing up their own plays, must use timeouts to stop the clock the way we do, etc.... In short, they are "coaching" for me to see if they know how we want to play the end of the game. If they violate any of the requirements it is a technical foul on their team.

I expect them to ask me how many timeouts they have, whose possession arrow it is, and what the foul situation is. If they don't, I make the situations the worst I possibly can for

their team (ex: no timeouts, opponent in double bonus, etc…) If they ask, then I make the situations to their favor. That way, I have them thinking like I want them to think as a player in games.

112 **Up 1, opponent scores a field goal to take the lead, 10 seconds clock running.** Our rule is that if there are less than 5 seconds and our opponent scores a field goal where the clock is running (not a free throw where the clock is stopped); we call timeout, if we have any remaining. If there are more than 5 seconds, we get the ball in and push it up the floor until the dribbler sees that we don't have an advantage—at that point the player with the ball calls timeout. If he can get a shot or get to the basket, we will take that. My philosophy is that pushing the ball immediately at the defense is the best way to get an opportunity for an open shot or to get to the basket in open court transition than it is to set up a play to run against a set half court defense. However, if we don't have an advantage, we will call timeout and look to run our sideline game winner.

The 130 Winning Special Situations eBook is broken into the following chapters:

1 Philosophy of Special Situations   8 End of Game General
2 Practicing Special Situations   9 End of Game Offense
3 General situations in flow of game   10 End of Game Defense
4 Offensive situations in flow of game   11 End of Game Defense
5 Defensive situations in flow of game   12 Practicing end of game special situations
6 End of 1st 2nd, 3rd Quarters   13 Specific Time and Score Situations to Practice
7 End of game philosophy

In addition to the 13 samples that you just read, some of the other ideas are:

- If we do lose, how would I rather lose a late-game lead?
- How to emphasize the importance of every possession and every situation.
- Giving your players confidence in game special situations
- Using special rules to make your practice situations more competitive
- Scoring with 2 on 1 situations

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130 Winning Special Situations

- Rebounding free throws with an undersized team
- Converting to defense from missed free throws
- Pressing on a missed free throw
- Last second plays, underneath inbounds plays, sideline inbounds plays, full court
- End of game communication
- Being thorough when you practice special situations
- 21 specific time and score situations to practice and how to teach them

There are 130 topics covered in all!

I offer a full no questions asked refund for anyone who purchases the eBook and is not satisfied with what you receive.

For more information on purchasing the entire book with 130 Winning Special Situations, visit this link by clicking on it or copying and pasting it into your browser:

http://www.coachingtoolbox.net/ebooks/special-situations/basketball-special-situations-ebook.html

As always, you can contact me at info@coachingtoolbox.net or call me at 765-366-9673

Thanks for your interest in this sample ebook!

Sincerely,

Brian Williams