

offensive team, second shot opportunities are so very valuable, so get after the rebound!!

5. SOME GOOD REBOUNDING DRILLS

1. Continuous Rebound and Outlet Drill

- Athletes form a line at each elbow. One player starts at each wing. The two groups at each side of the key work independently of each other.
- The first athlete in the line throws the ball up against the backboard, and jumps to rebound it. They then turn and make an outlet pass to the player at the wing.
- Once they have made the outlet, they then turn to pressure the outlet from the next player. Once they have played this 'defensive' role, they then become the outlet player, then rotate back into the first spot that they started. The drill continues in this manner.
- This is a great drill for teaching the kids to jump at the rebound, as well as helping them learn how to land ready to make their next move, in this case to pivot into the outlet pass.
- A good adjustment to this drill is to have coaches with bump pads in as the defensive players. They can then apply physical pressure on the player after they rebound, which simulates the game situation of having to rebound, absorb physical contact to get balanced, and then dribble out or make a safe outlet pass.

2. 2 on 2 Close Out Block Out Drill

- Two offensive players can position themselves anywhere on the floor, i.e. point and wing, corner and post etc. A passer starts with the ball at another spot on the floor. The 2 defenders adjust to the position of the ball.
- The passer feeds the ball to one of the offensive players who catches and shoots. The defence must adjust to the movement of the ball, i.e. close out, and then block out their player once the shot is released, whilst the offensive team also crashes the boards.
- If the offensive team rebounds, the game is live. The drill ends once the defensive team secures the rebound.
- This drill is highly game specific, and I find particularly useful because it involves blocking out the shooter as well as the non-shooter, which are two slightly different blocking out scenarios. I also like it because it chains two defensive skills together, i.e. closing out and blocking out.
- This drill can also be done as a 3 on 3 or 4 on 4 drill, and can be played in the full court with the defensive team getting into transition following a rebound.

3. 4 on 4 Rotation Block Out Drill

- Offensive players set up a step out from each block and a step out from each elbow. A shooter (or coach) starts with the ball at any position on the floor. Defence matches up on the offense and adjusts to the position of the ball.
- This drill can have a number of variations, triggered by a call from the shooter. I like to use the following;
Rotate: The defenders must rotate either clockwise or anti-clockwise, to guard the next offensive player from their man.
Crossover: The defenders must crossover and guard the player directly opposite the one they were initially guarding.
Exchange: The defenders exchange and guard the player next to them, either elbow-to-elbow, block-to-block or elbow o block depending on where they began.
- Once the shooter has called the change they shoot the ball, and the defence must hustle to rotate and then block out the player they have rotated to.
- I find this drill to be effective as it helps to train the athletes to block out following a defensive rotation or defensive activity, which is of course highly game specific, and again is good in chaining a series of skills together.

4. Offensive Rebounding and Put Back Drill

- Shooter starts at the top of the key. The offensive player can start at any position on the floor that they wish, with a defender (often the coach) setting up with bump pads guarding them. A second defender begins near the basket ready to come in. It can also be beneficial to have this defender using a bump pad.
- The shot goes up, and the defence uses the bump pads to simulate a block out on their man. The offensive player looks to execute one of the offensive rebounding techniques discussed earlier to break the block out and get the rebound. The defender merely applies physical pressure to the contest, but does not attempt to get the rebound.
- Once they have rebounded the ball, the offense looks to complete the put back. The second defender does not get involved in the rebounding contest, but comes in to put pressure on the offense as they attempt to complete the put back.
- Once again this is a great drill for training your athletes to be able to execute a number of skills in succession, as is expected of them in a game situation. They get to practice the offensive rebounding techniques, must then land balanced and ready to execute their next skill, and then look to complete the put back, all whilst under physical pressure.



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The Building Better Basketball Coaches Series for this month talks about Rebounding. I remember as a young coach starting out, I once went to a WNBL training session to observe and learn. Following the session the coach was good enough to sit down with me and answer any questions I had, and just to discuss basketball in general. I mentioned to him that I saw Rebounding as a weakness in girls basketball in general, and I asked him what he saw as the best way to get kids to block out. His answer was 'I wish I knew!' I'm sure a lot of coaches will read this and nod their heads in agreement, as the frustrations of trying to get their players to block out on a consistent basis come flooding into their minds. Since that day a few years ago I have been particularly interested in learning more about teaching blocking out and rebounding in general, and now I quite enjoy the challenge of trying to turn players into consistent and aggressive rebounders.

Last year's Building Better Basketball article regarding Rebounding introduced many of the basic components and concepts of rebounding. In this edition I have tried to extend on a bit of that knowledge, and provide some more specific teaching points and ideas that I have found useful when teaching this often poorly executed skill of our game.

1. SOME STARTING POINTS FOR TEACHING REBOUNDING

Following are some key areas that form the basis of developing strong rebounders. Athletes will find it hard to be successful in any of the more specific rebounding situations that are to follow, if they do not first develop a solid grounding in the following areas;

1. **STANCE;** A low, wide and balanced stance is highly important when preparing to rebound. In a 1 on 1 situation (i.e. a block out), a good guide to whether the stance is wide enough is for the athlete to have their feet wider than their opponent's feet, to ensure good coverage over their opponent. In general, being in good stance will ensure that your athlete can hold their ground in a physical contest, and also that they are ready to jump and catch the ball when the time is right
2. **BLOCKING OUT;** There will be more specific information regarding blocking out later, but again, as much coverage over their opponent as possible should be the athlete's major aim. As well as having a wide stance they should carry their hands 'big and wide', to be ready to take possession of the ball should it come in their direction. Also, encourage your athletes to have the mindset that every shot is going to miss, and therefore they should block out or attack the 'boards' on every shot!
3. **JUMP TO MEET THE BALL;** Whilst this might sound simple, many young kids don't necessarily have an aggressive enough mindset to go and meet the ball. Encourage them to work on their timing, and jump and meet the ball in the air.
4. **SECURE AND PROTECT THE BALL;** Once they take possession of the ball, it is important firstly that your athletes have it protected. I like to teach my kids to 'chin the ball', i.e. bring it up high around chin height and use their elbows to protect it. Secondly, once they have secured and protected the ball, athletes must be ready to make their next move. There are a number of options following a rebound, such as a shot following an offensive rebound, pivoting to get balance, passing (i.e. an outlet), or to dribble. Landing in a balanced stance will give athletes the best chance of executing these subsequent skills more effectively.

2. BLOCKING OUT – DEFENSIVE REBOUNDING

Below are some teaching points that I have found useful when attempting to develop a mindset of blocking out in players. Blocking out is a non-negotiable in all defensive rebounding situations, but may also be appropriate when rebounding offensively if your player has established position closer to the basket than their man.

1. **'Check'** - As soon as the shot has been released, I like to teach my players that their first responsibility is to 'check' their man, i.e. see the position of their man. If their man is the shooter, this is simpler as they know instantly where their man is. If they are defending away from the ball it is a bit tougher as they are likely to be in a help position some distance from their man, eg on the splitline, and must quickly identify where the player they are guarding is situated.
2. **'Line'** - The next cue word I like to give my kids is 'line', meaning to get themselves to the line between their man and the basket. Again, this is easy when it is their player that has shot the ball as they will generally already be in this spot, but a bit tougher when they are defending away from the ball. Once they are between their man and the basket and have established this 'inside' position, their man is in a much less threatening position.
3. **'Stamp'** - Once the athlete has established inside position, the next key word I teach is to get a 'stamp' on their man. Generally their man will be moving toward the basket once the shot is released in order to be a rebounding threat themselves, so I teach my kids to establish contact with their man by being in a low stance and using an arm bar (with the arm closest to their man) to stop their player in their tracks on their movement towards the rebound. This will go a long way to ensuring that they have 'controlled their man', before they worry about 'controlling the ball', which is where most players go

wrong when rebounding.

4. **'Pivot'** - Once they have established a 'stamp' and have controlled their man, the athlete should then look to complete their block out. The next key word I teach is 'pivot', which simply means that they should then reverse pivot and 'sit' on their man. From this position they can see the ball and jump at it to rebound if it bounces off the ring into an area near them, and also maintain their position as their opponent tries to break the block out.

* If all five defensive players on the floor commit to executing the four steps above as often as possible, the defensive team will generally provide themselves with the best possible opportunity to establish possession of the ball.

5. **Jam Up Block Out** - Alternate to the above, your player may be required to defend a rebounder that has already established position close to the basket. Due to their proximity to the basket, your athlete will not have time to execute the four steps above in order to get a block out. In these situations I teach my players to 'jam up' on their man. This merely means getting into the 'space' of their opponent, using an arm bar to try to move their man out of this threatening position close to the basket and carrying their free hand try to deflect the ball out of court (or away from immediate danger).

3. OFFENSIVE REBOUNDING – BEATING A BLOCK OUT

Rebounding is an often forgotten skill in the offensive play phase. Often athletes will watch a shot go up, and merely stand around and wait to see what happens next, rather than getting after the offensive boards and second shot opportunities. Below are some techniques that I like to teach my players in order to break a block out, which is often the case in offensive rebounding situations.

1. Arm Slash

The first technique is probably the simplest, and merely involves the blocked out player executing an arm slash with their inside arm. Once they have slashed their opponents arm away, they will be able to swing their inside leg over their opponent's leg to negate their opponent's advantage and establish inside position. It is important to note with this technique that if your athlete has been blocked out by someone who is their height or shorter, in attempting to break the block out they should execute a regular 'forward' arm slash. If they are attempting to break the block out of someone taller than them though, they may find it more beneficial to execute a 'reverse arm slash'. With a reverse arm slash, rather than coming over the top of the opponent's inside arm, the slash will come from underneath.

2. Step Back and Go

The second technique is what I call 'step back and go'. In the action of effectively blocking out, the defender will 'sit' and slightly lean on their opponent. I teach my players to take advantage of this and step back, with the result being that their opponent will go slightly off balance. This will provide your player with a clearer passage to the basket and they can then attack the rebound with some element of freedom from the block out.

3. Spin

The third technique I like to teach is the 'spin'. This involves the athlete leaning into the block out, and spinning (reverse pivot) off the foot closest to their opponent. Again, as the player blocking out will be leaning slightly backward, as your athlete spins their opponent will be put off balance which will decrease the effectiveness of their block out and open the rebounding path for your player.

4. SOME KEY THINGS TO REMEMBER REGARDING REBOUNDING

- **Rebounding is part of the defensive play phase...** your players wouldn't think to stop competing before the last ball reversal was made, or before a post move was completed, so why should they stop competing before the rebound is secured!
- **Train the rebounding mentality...** Try to ensure that all competitive drills at your practice sessions end with a rebounding contest, and not before. Often players will do a drill and finish once the offensive player has shot the ball, rather than competing for the rebound as would be expected of them in a game. This is a good way to train the rebounding mentality, and also your athletes' ability to compete for the duration of a play phase, by ensuring that your athletes are playing the drill out in a game specific manner whether they are in offense or defence.
- **'Use the fingertips as the trigger'**... This merely means that blocking out and rebounding should begin as soon as the shot leaves the fingertips. Often players will watch the ball in flight then remember to block out, which is clearly not time effective and puts them on the back foot, and may also result in them losing the important inside position.
- **Reward yourselves for good defence...** There is nothing more frustrating for the defensive team than to force a missed shot from the offense, only to have them come up with an offensive rebound and a second shot opportunity. Reward yourself for good defence by completing the defensive play phase and coming up with the ball. Conversely for the