

**THE PRINCETON  
OFFENSE  
FOR HIGH SCHOOL  
PROGRAMS**



**DUANE SILVER**

# **Praise for Coach Silver's Playbooks**

I have used several ideas and concepts within our basketball program that Coach Silver presents in many of his playbooks. Coach Silver possesses a rare talent which allows him to put detailed information into a simplistic form that middle and high school athletes can effectively execute. Coach Silver's playbooks can help you take your program to the next level. Our basketball program here at Mumford serves as proof. I highly recommend them to basketball coaches at all levels.

Chris Sodek, Mumford, Texas HS

I have bought and used Coach Duane Silver's basketball playbooks for several years now. Coach Silver has compiled a wide range of playbooks on offense, defense, press offense and defense, out of bounds plays as well as practice drills. Coach Silver

has studies the game from many different coaches at all levels. He has compiled and is sharing his wealth of information for those who want to learn and improve their coaching game from beginner basketball through college.

Coach Kelly Combs, Athletes in Action, 2 years High School Coaching, 18 years College Coaching, 5 years International Coaching.

# **The Princeton Offense**

## **For**

# **High School Programs**

**By Duane Silver**

Wiffletree World, LLC

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# The Little Things

1. The more pressure the defense uses the better this offense will work.
2. The Center is really the point guard in this offense because his passing keys the offense. (The more he passes the more shots he gets.)
3. When the offense breaks down simply set it back up. It is no sin to reset this offense.
4. All four outside players need to know all four outside positions.
5. This is a two guard front offense.
6. This alignment of this offense is 2-2-1 (two guards, two forwards, and a center).
7. Dribble handoffs are an important part of this offense.
8. The low postman loves this offense because he

does not always have to stay in the low post he can break to the elbows to get open.

9. Here is an important saying for this offense:  
“Watch the man in front of you and he will tell you what to do” (Pete Carril).
10. This offense is based on shooting lay-ups and three point shots.
11. You will need to keep a statistic on who feeds the low post.
12. If you can't V-Cut and move without the ball this offense will not work.
13. If you fast break this offense will work even better. This is not a slow down offense. It can be used as an up-tempo offense.
14. When your team shoots the ball both of your guards should get back for defense. (This way you will not give up too many lay-ups)
15. Here is a miss-conception: You can take your



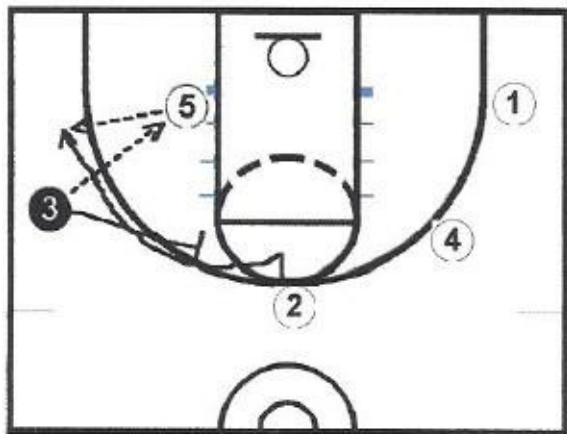
man off of the dribble if you have the athletic ability.

16. You must make “HARD CUTS” without the ball to get open.

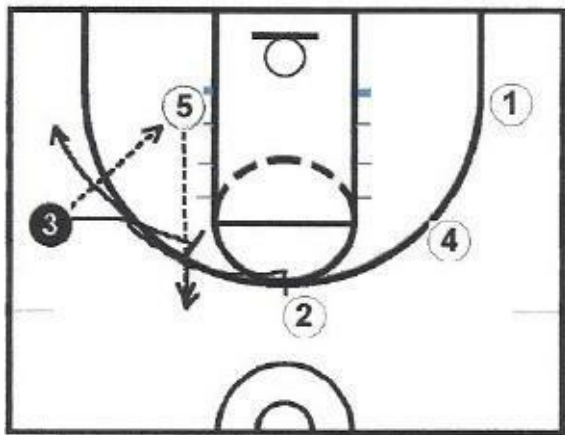
# Princeton Offense Part A



One passes to 3 cuts hard to the opposite corner. 2 and 4 move toward the middle of the floor, but 2 never moves passed the rim level.



3 passes to 5 posted up strong and screens near the elbow area for 2 to come off of him and get a pass from 5 for a jump shot. This is the bread and butter part of our offense.



In this frame 3 passes to 5 in the post and screens away for 2, but 2 is covered so 5 passes to 3 stepping for a three point shot.

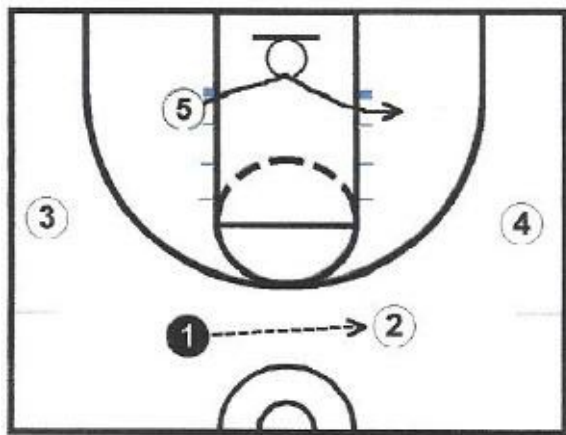


3 again passes to 5 posted up and screens away for 2, but 2 reads the defense and goes backdoor and gets a bounce pass from 5 for a lay-up.

**GENERAL COMMENTS:** This is the most important part of the Princeton Offense. We must get the ball to the low postman a high percentage of the time. The more 5 passes back outside the more he will score in this offense.



# Princeton Offense Part A-1

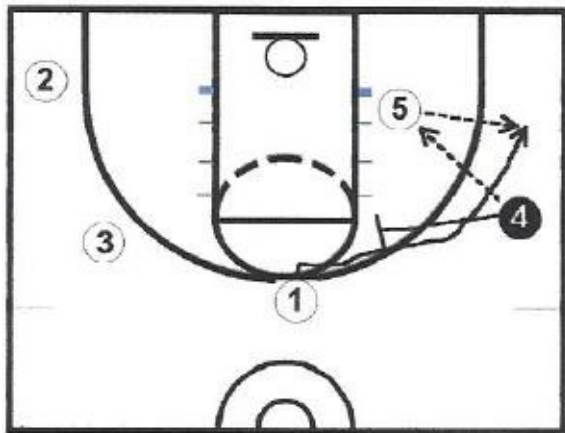


One passes to 2 and 5 crosses the lane to get open on the right block, 4 will be starting his v-cut to get open on the right wing.

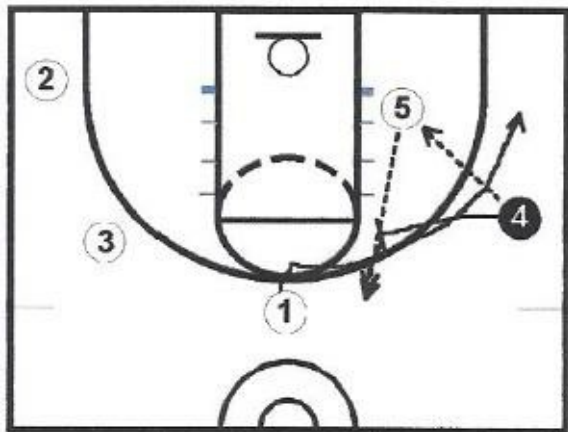


2 passes to 4 and cuts to the left corner, 1 moves to the top of the key, 3 moves up one or two steps toward half court.





4 passes to 5 posted up inside and screens for 1 to come off of him for a jump shot, 4 after screening will step back behind the three point line for a jump shot if there is a switch between X4 and X1.



5 passes to 4 here for a three point shot. If 5 can he will think about scoring every time he catches the ball posted up.

**GENERAL COMMENTS:** There are lots of things that can happen on this play. We believe that we can get the ball to the postman seven out of ten times once the ball gets to the wing.



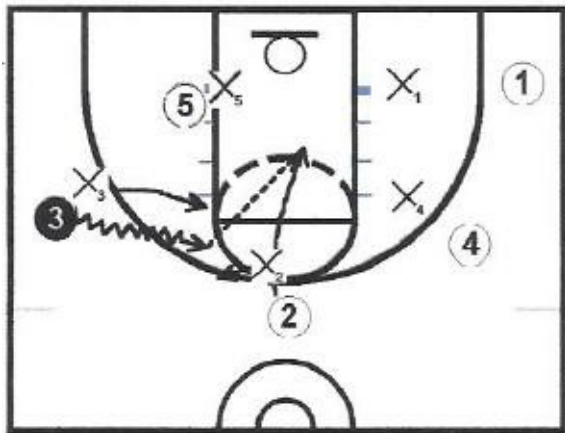
# Princeton Offense Part B



One passes to 3 and cuts hard to the right corner. The other players will move toward the ball two or three steps.



3 could not pass to 5 posted up so he runs a dribble hand off with 2 and after 2 takes the hand off he looks for a three point shot or 5 reposting up inside.



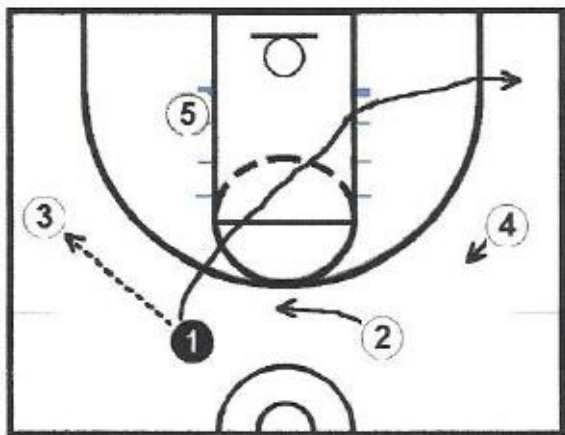
Now we have 3 dribbling to hand off to 2 up top, but 2 is over played and goes backdoor, 2 will then throw a bounce pass to 4 for a lay-up. (You need to remember X1 and X4 will be helping inside.)







# Princeton Offense Part C



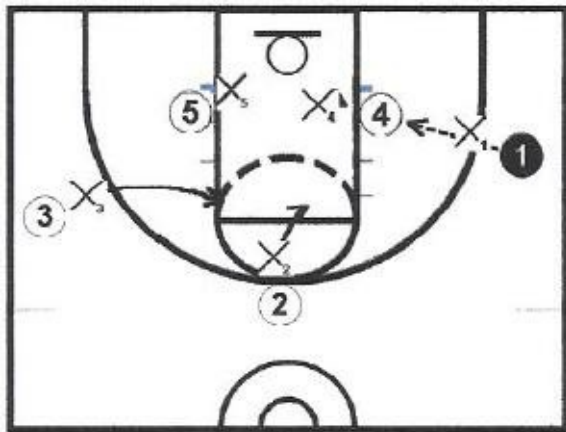
One passes to 3 and breaks to the right corner 2 and 4 move toward the ball and spot up. (1 must make a hard cut to the goal.)



3 passes to 2 up top here, and then we have 2 passing to 4 going backdoor because he is over played by X4. (You must remember X1 will be helping inside on the cut by 4.)



In this frame 2 cannot pass to 4 going backdoor so he passes to 1 moving up to the wing because his man helped on the backdoor cut by 4. 4 after cutting will post up inside.



Here 1 passes to 4 posted up on the right block. 1 after passing could screen away for 2 up top or he could spot up for a three point shot.

**GENERAL COMMENTS:** You must remember that the Princeton offense is not a play, but a motion offense which reads the defense and has great spacing. The players must be made to do it your way!!



# Princeton Offense Part D



One passes to 3 and cuts to the right corner every one else moves toward the ball and sports up. 2 does not go past the rim. If he does it will mess up the screening angle.



3 passes to 5 in the post and X3 doubles teams the post man in this action we will have 2 screen for 4 to come to the top of the key for a three point shot. 2 after screening will step behind the line.



In this frame 5 reads the defense and passes to 2 stepping back behind the three point line after screening for 4. 2 could go backdoor after picking for 4. (5 could pass back to 3 for a three pointer.)

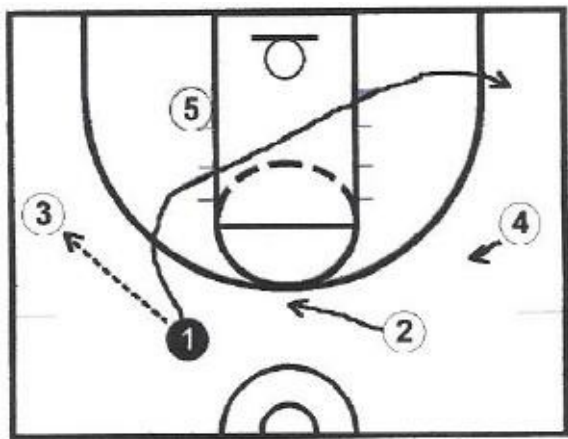




Here we take the same action, but 5 takes his man off of the dribble.

**GENERAL COMMENTS:** These are all reads by the 5 man and you need to remember that the postman is like a point guard in this offense because he has to make lots of passing decisions.

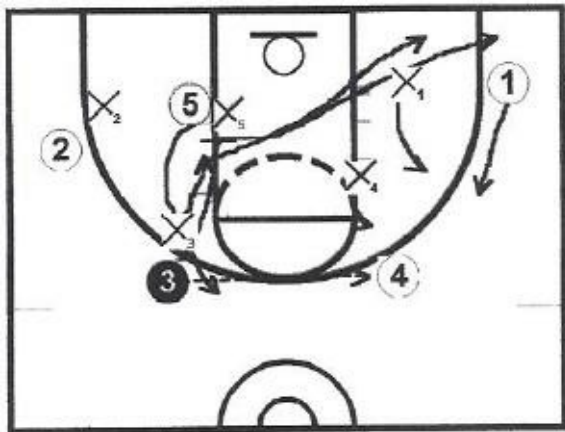
# Princeton Dribble Option



One passes to 3 and cuts hard to the opposite corner.  
2 and 4 move up slightly.



3 dribbles toward 2 to make a hand off, but 2 is overplayed so he goes backdoor 3 will look to pass to him here for a lay-up if he is open.



Here 3 passes to 4 and runs the rub with 5's man and goes to the opposite corner. 4 will be looking to take his man off of the dribble or pass to 5 coming to the elbow area.

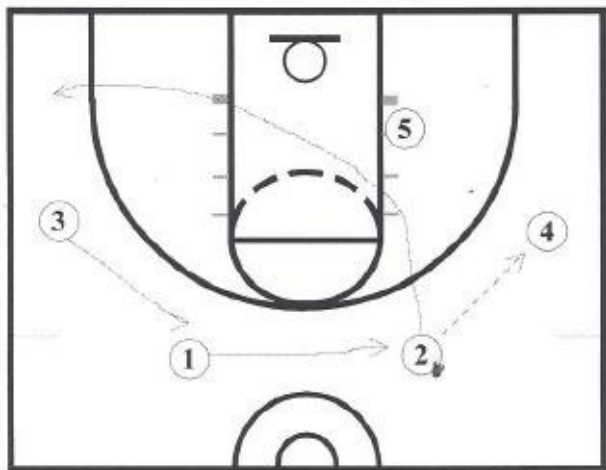


In this frame 4 passes to 5 and screens away for 2 come over and get a hand off from 5 for a three point shot. (4 has the option here of screening for 1 and going backdoor.)

**GENERAL COMMENTS:** One thing about this offense is that it is so simple it ends up being complex. Spacing and V-Cutting is the key to this offense.



# Princeton Backdoor Action

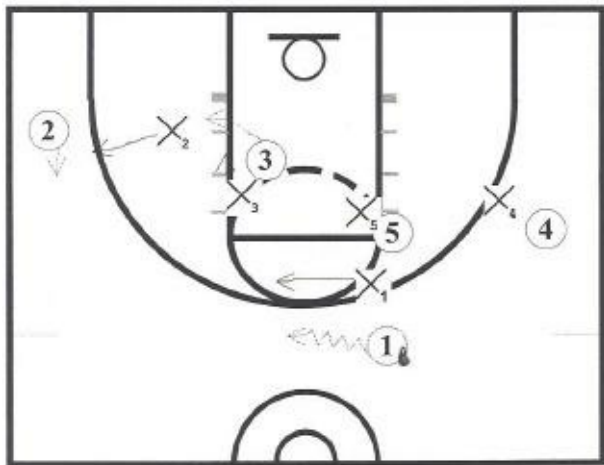


2 passes to 4 and cuts through hard going to the opposite corner. 1 rotates to 2's starting spot and 3 rotates to where 1 started. 5 posts up strong.

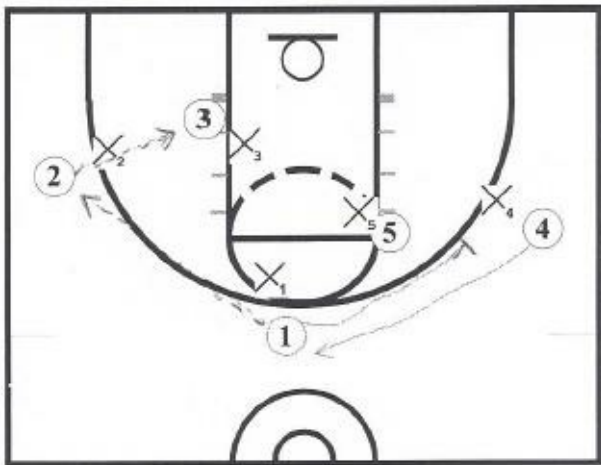


4 passes to 1, 3 goes backdoor hard when 1 looks at him after catching the pass from 4, 5 moves to the right elbow, 1 hits 3 going backdoor.





If 1 cannot pass to 3 he will dribble to his left and get ready to pass to 2 because X2 has helped on 3's backdoor cut.

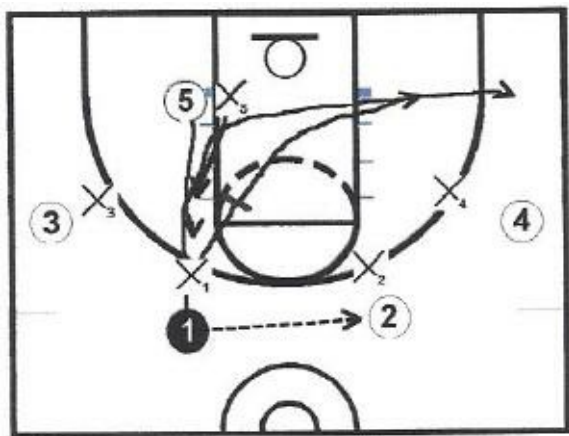


1 passes to 2 and interchanges with 4, 2 passes to 3 posted up.

**GENERAL COMMENTS:** This is the Princeton Backdoor Action that they are noted for running. This takes lots of practice to perfect, but when you do you are almost impossible to stop. Remember if they do not guard you hard on the perimeter you will look to shoot

the three point shot.

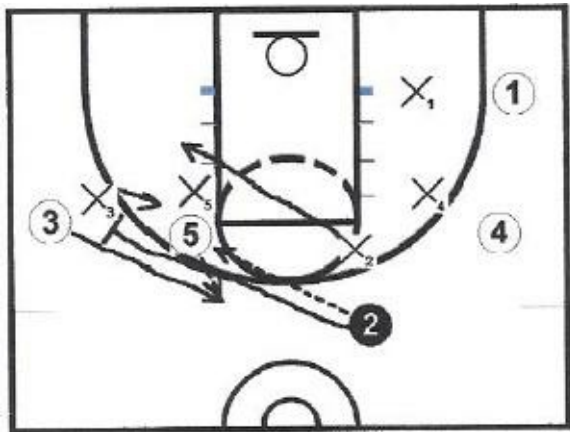
# Princeton Rub-1



In this frame 1 could not pass to 3 so he passes to 2 up top, 1 will run at X5 and 5 will rub his man off of 1's man, 1 will follow his rule after cutting and go to the opposite corner.







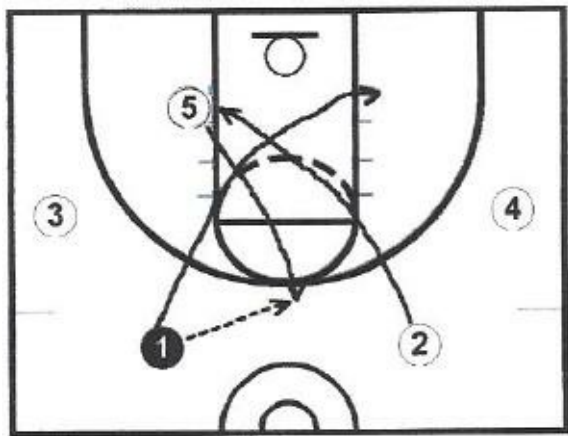
In this frame 2 passes to 5 and screens for 3 to come over and get a hand off from 5 and shoot a three point shot. You need to remember that on any over play by the defense will set up a backdoor cut.

**GENERAL COMMENTS:** This action is all predicated on getting the ball to 5 near the elbow. 5 must time his rub off of 1 to get open. (Rule if 1 passes to 2 or 3 he cuts to the corner.)

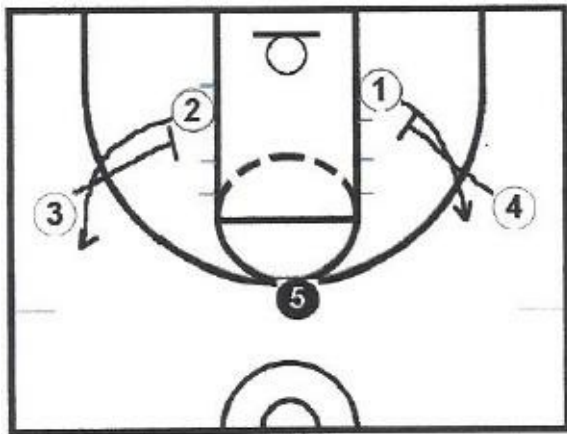




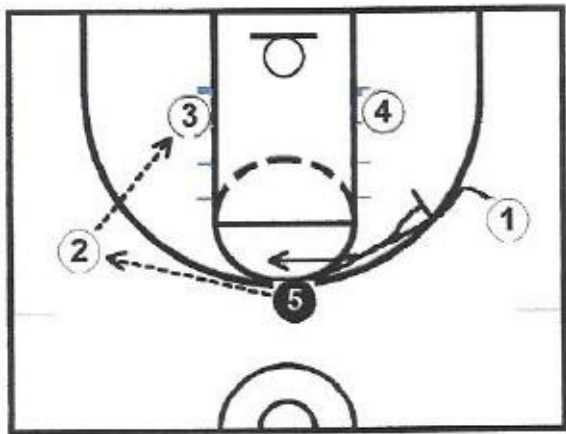
# High Post



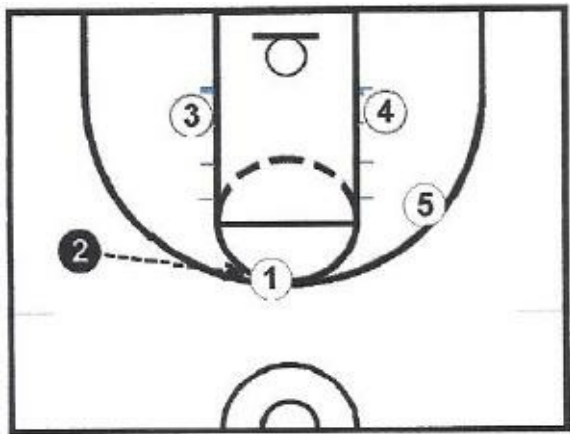
5 breaks up high in the middle of the floor and gets a pass from 1. 1 and 2 will cross by breaking to the opposite blocks. 4 and 5 will stay on the wings preparing to screen down for the guards.



When 1 and 2 get to the blocks and stop 3 and 4 will screen down for 1 and 2 go to pop out to the wings off of their screens. Timing is important here 3 and 4 should not screen down too soon!



5 can pass to 1 or 2, but here we have him passing to 2 and screening away for 1 to come up top. If 2 cannot shoot the jump shot he can feed 3 posted up on the block as shown in this diagram.



If 3 is covered while posting up 2 can pass to 1 up top coming off of 5's screen. If this action does not create a shot 5 will go back to the low post and we will reset our regular 2-2-1 offense.

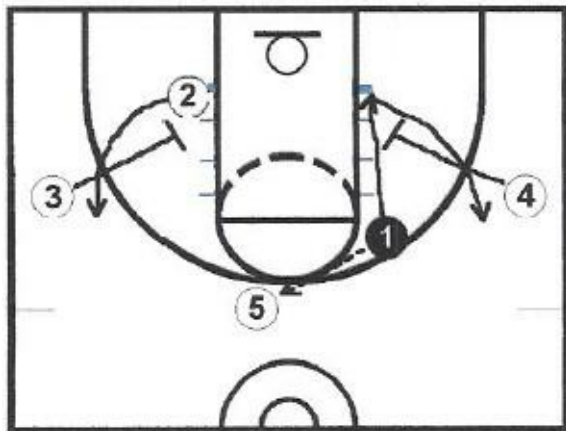
**GENERAL COMMENTS:** This is a very good option because it creates a lot of player movement, 5 likes this action because he does not have to stay in the low post. If 1 cannot pass to 5 he can pass to 2 who

can pass to 5.

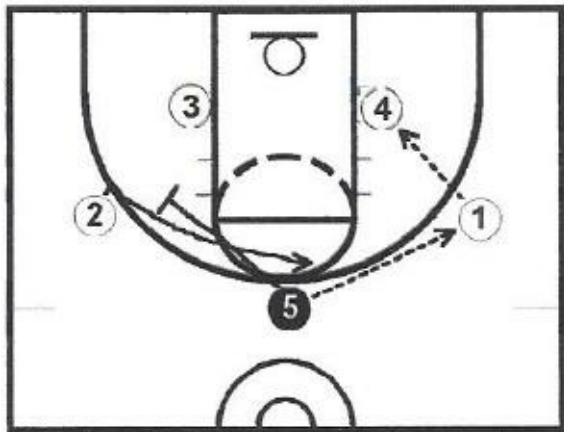
# Princeton Pick and Pop



5 starts out up high, 1 dribbles at 2 and waves him through to the opposite block. 1 will dribble off of 5 looking for a jump shot or 5 popping back after ball screening.

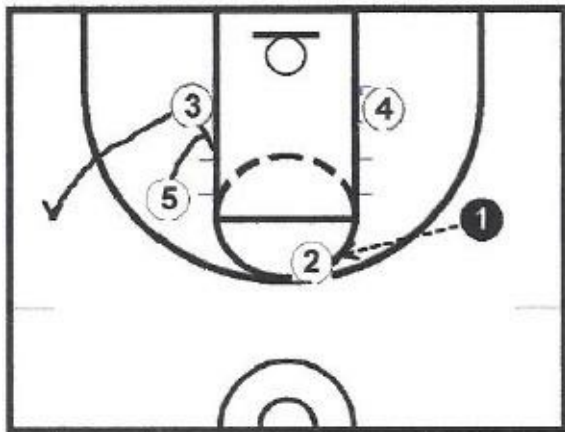


If 1 cannot shoot he will pass back to 5 who looks for the three point shot. When the ball is passed to 5, 3 and 4 will screen down hard for 1 and 2 to come out to the wings.



Here 5 passes to 1 for a three point shot. If 1 cannot shoot he will look inside to 4 posted up. After 5 passes to 1 he will screen away for 2 to come up top.





If 1 cannot pass to 4 posted up he will pass to 2 at the top of the key for a shot. 5 will screen down for 3 so he can be in good rebounding position.

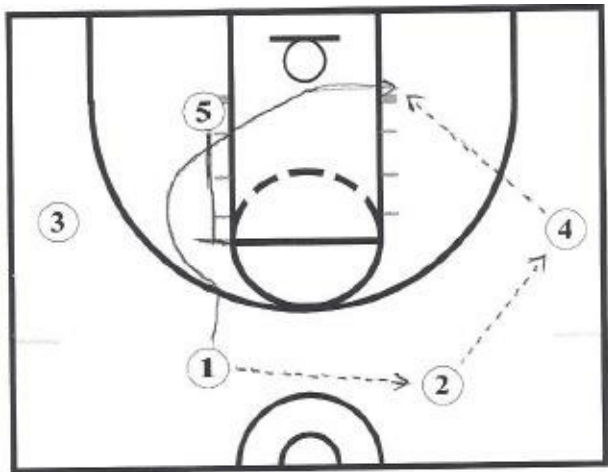
**GENERAL COMMENTS:** If you cannot find a shot out of these options you will line up in the regular Princeton Offense. Remember it is no sin to reset your offense because you have the ball and you are in control.



# Princeton Offense: Chin Series

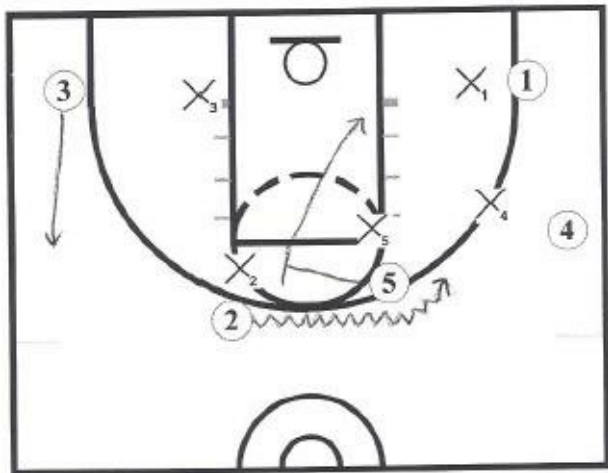


Regular 2-3 Alignment: 1 touches his chin to signal for this action.



1 passes to 2 and 2 quickly passes to 4, 5 backscreens for 1 to break to the ballside block and get a pass from 4 for a lay-up.





On the catch by 2 if he cannot shoot 5 will break and ball screen for him. 5 after ball screening will roll to the rim.

**GENERAL COMMENTS:** This is a called play. It can be run about five times a game. If you don't get a shot off of it, run the regular Princeton Offense.



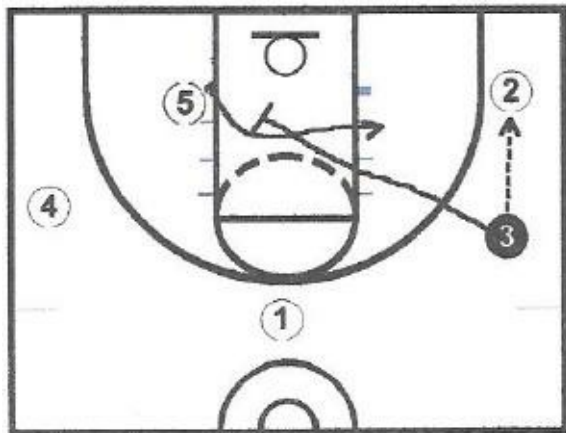
# Special



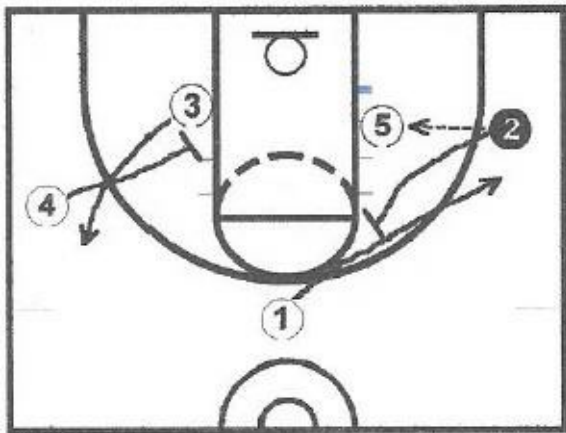
2-3 Alignment with the 5 man on the block opposite the ball.







After 3 passes to 2 he will go set a hard screen for the 5 man coming to the ballside block. He will receive a pass from 2 in the right corner.



2 will pass to 5 and then up screen for 1 to get open on the right wing. If there is a switch 2 will cut to the rim. 4 will down screen for 3 on the weakside of the floor. 5 will read the defense.

**GENERAL COMMENTS:** This is a great thing to do out of the Princeton Offense, if you are playing a team that denies the 5 man the ball. We run this play to both sides of the floor.

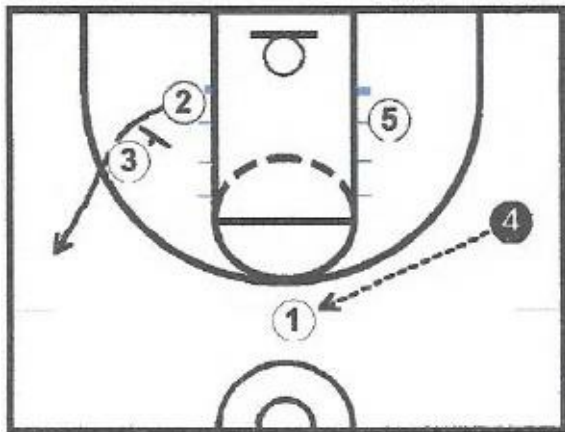


# Princeton Cross

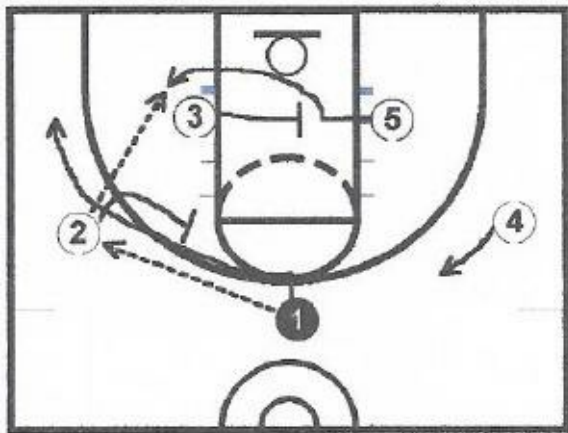


Regular two guard front Princeton Alignment, 5 will always start on the ballside of the floor.





In this frame 4 passes to 1 up top and 3 down screens for 2 to get open on the left wing. 5 will wait for the ball to get to 2 before he moves. (Against pressure 1 can go backdoor.)



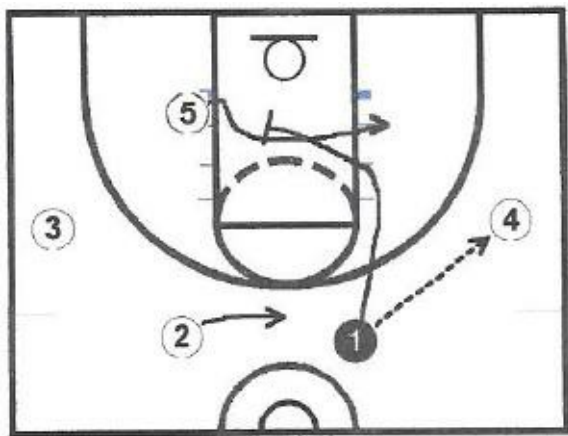
Here we have 1 passing to 2 and 3 cross screening for 5. 1 will pass to 5 who looks to score or he can pass to 1 coming off of 2's screen. 1 can go backdoor on this action.

**GENERAL COMMENTS:** You need to be able to run this set to both sides of the floor. This is a great way to get the ball to your low postman if he is up against a good defender. This play has great ball

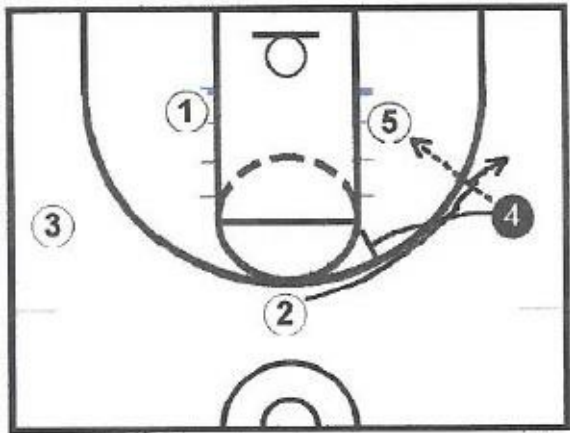


movement.

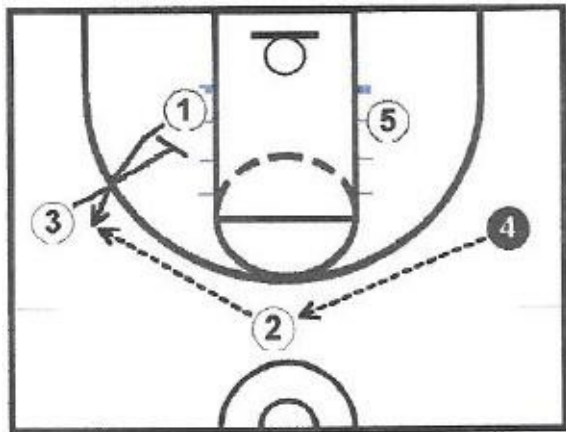
# Double Cross



This set can be run to both sides of the floor. In this frame: 1 passes to 4 and cuts to the rim and screens for 5 to come to the ball side block to get a pass from 4. 2 moves to top of the key.



In this frame 4 passes to 5 posted up and screens for 2 to come off of him for a shot. 5 reads the defense, he can pass to 2 or 4 if the defense switches the screen. (3 could be open on the weak side.)



Here we reverse the ball from 4 to 2 when the ball gets to 2, 3 screens down for 1 to pop out to the left wing to get a pass from 2. If 4 cannot hit 2 up top 2 goes backdoor hard to the goal.

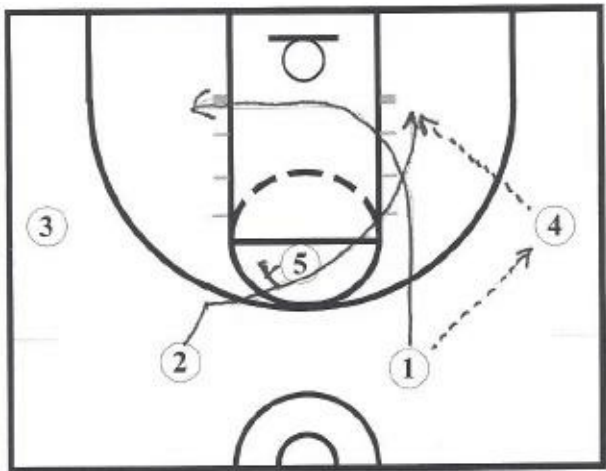


teams.

# Princeton Slam

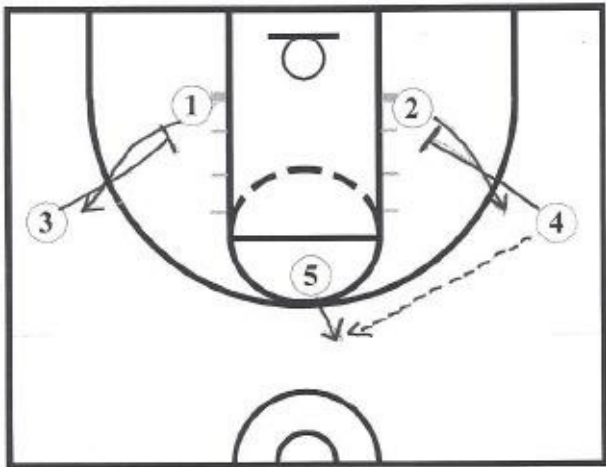


2-1-2 alignment:



1 passes to 4 and makes a hard basket cut. Right after 1 cuts 2 cuts off of 5's high post screen and gets a pass from 4 for a lay-up.





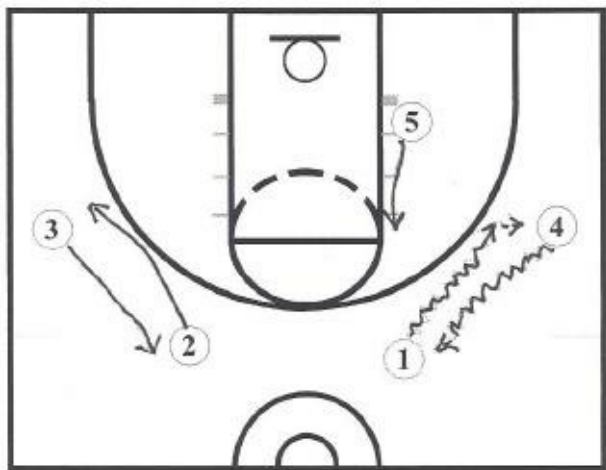
If 2 is covered 4 will pass to 5 stepping outside and 4 and 3 will down screen for 1 and 2. 5 can shoot or drive down the middle.



Here 5 reverses the ball to 1, 3 cross screens for 4 and 5 screens away for 2. 1 passes to 2 for a jump shot.

**GENERAL COMMENTS:** Slam is a called set out of the Princeton Offense. You need to run this set to both sides of the floor.

# Princeton Weave



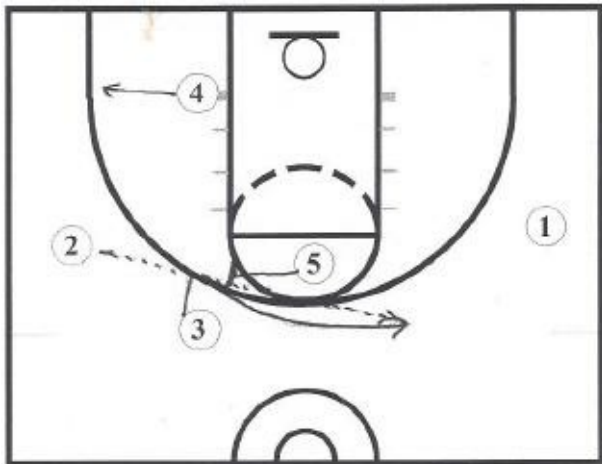
2-2-1 Set: 1 dribbles to the right wing and hands off to 4 to dribble up top. 2 and 3 interchange, 5 breaks to the right elbow.



4 passes to 3 who is out of shooting range. 3 quickly passes to 2 who passes to 4 coming off of 5's backscreen.



If 4 is not open 3 will out off of 5's second backscreen and get a pass from 2 for a lob and lay-up. 3 can curl or fade on this option.

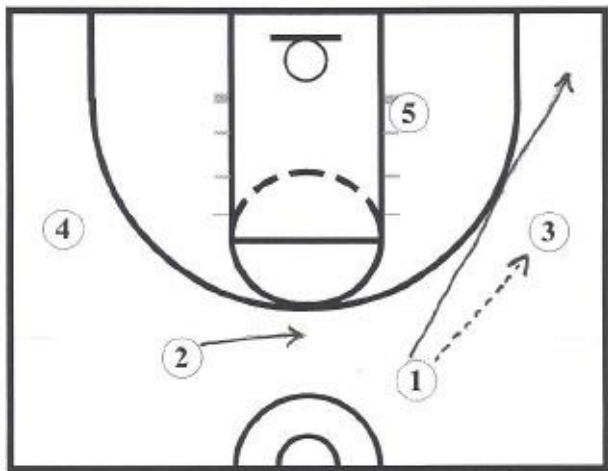


In this frame we have 3 fading and getting a pass from 2 for three point shot. If 3 is not open, 5 will ball screen for 2 to drive.

**GENERAL COMMENTS:** Note: In the final frame, after 5's back screen for 3, if 3 is not open he will ball screen for 2 to run a pick and roll. This option is not shown in the frame. The New Jersey Nets run this

option out of the Princeton Offense very effectively.

# Vandy



1 passes to 3 and sprints to the ballside corner instead of going opposite corner.





If 3 cannot feed the low post he will dribble looking to pass to 2 up top. If 2 is overplayed he goes backdoor and gets a pass from 3.

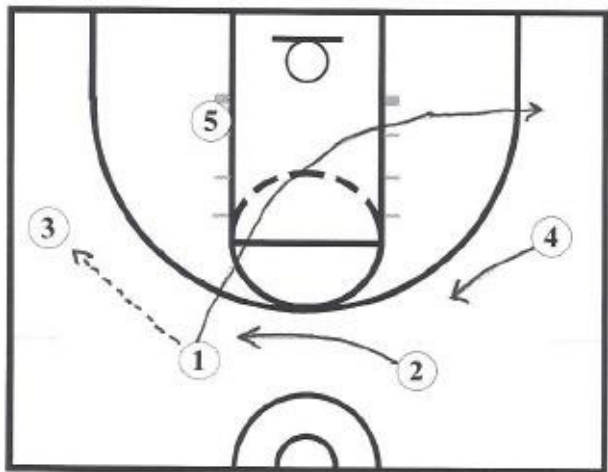


If 2 is not open 4 will move up and get a pass from 3. 3 will then down screen for the low post man (5) to come up the lane line.





# Princeton 1<sup>st</sup> Option



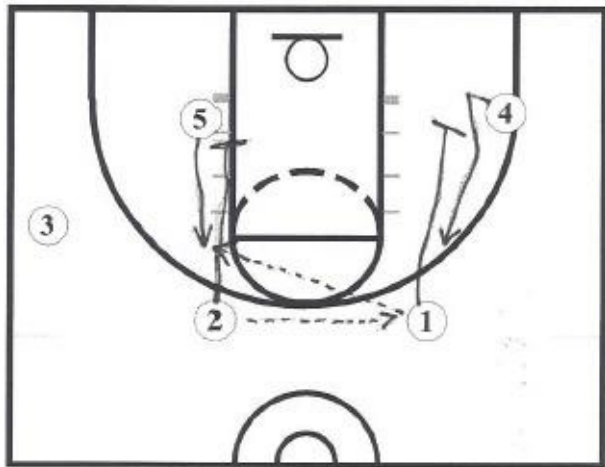
1 has dribbled the ball down the floor and passes to 3 and makes hard cut to the opposite corner. 2 and 4 move up one spot toward the 3 man.



If 3 cannot pass to 5 posted up he will pass to 2 who passes to 4 and down screens for 5 to come to the left elbow.



In this frame 3 passes to 2, who wants to pass to 4, but 4 goes backdoor (2 will pass to 4 if he is open) 4 and 1 will now switch spots.



Now 2 passes to 1 who is open up top. After 2 passes to 1 he will down screen for 5 to come to the left elbow. 1 passes to 5 and screens away for 4. 1 could screen for 3 (1 has a choice)

**GENERAL COMMENTS:** Here is a good rule for this offense after the entry pass if there is a pass from guard to guard up top the passer will down screen for

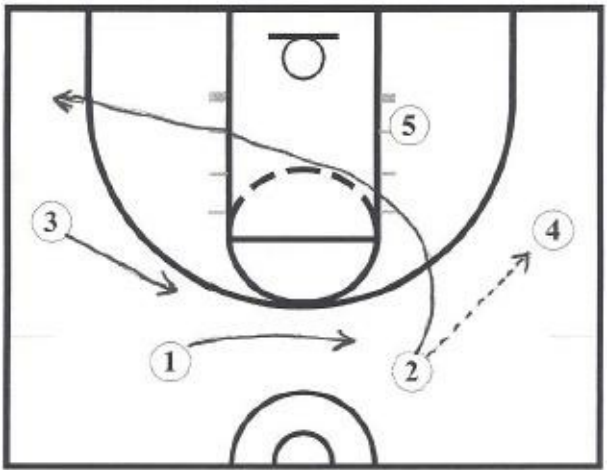


the low post man. This is important to teach your players.

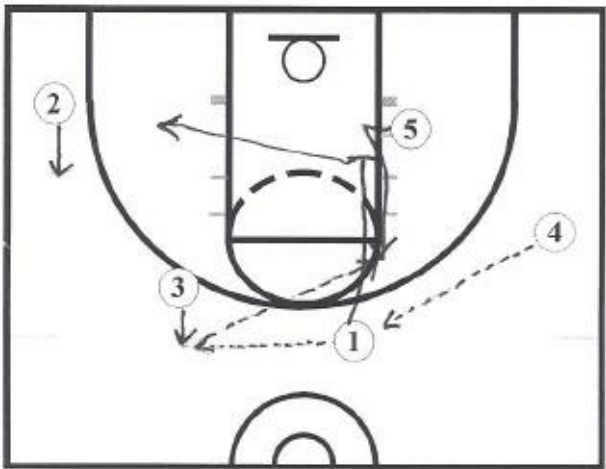
# Princeton 2<sup>nd</sup> Option



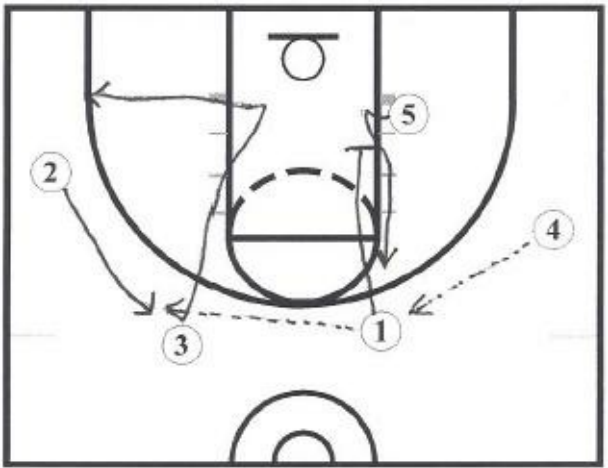
1 has dribbled the ball down the floor and passes to 2 up top. When this happens 5 will move the opposite low position. (1 will not down screen for 5 when we are starting the offense.)



2 passes to 4 and cuts to the left corner, everyone else moves up one spot toward the 4 man.



4 passes to 1 who passes to 3, 1 down screens for 5 to come to the right elbow. 3 passes to 5. After 1 screens for 5 he will move to the left corner.

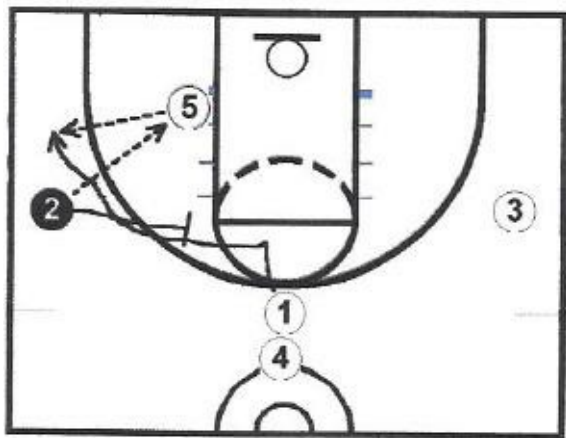


In this frame 4 passes to 1, 3 goes backdoor 2 moves up and gets a pass from 1. 1 down screens for 5 and we are in the offense.

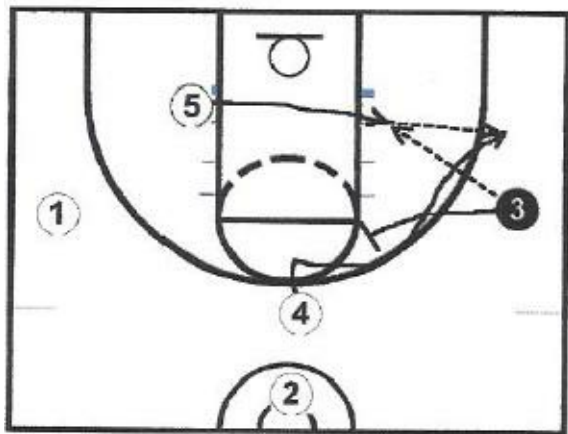
**GENERAL COMMENTS:** If you will teach Princeton Options 1 and 2 the players will be able to run this offense with no trouble.



# Princeton Drills-1

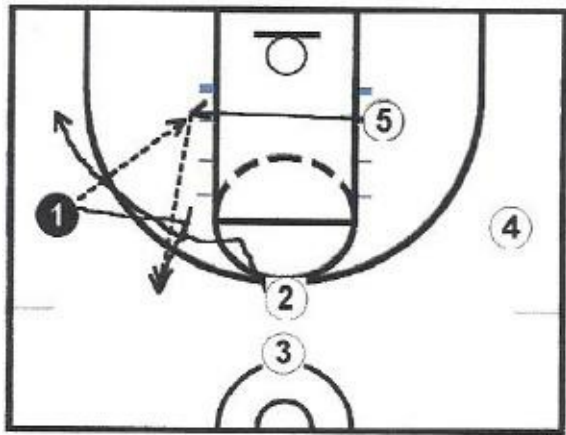


2 passes to 5 in the post and screens up top for 1 to come off of him and get a pass from 5 for a jump shot. 2 will go to the middle line and 1 will rotate to the line 2 started in on the left side.

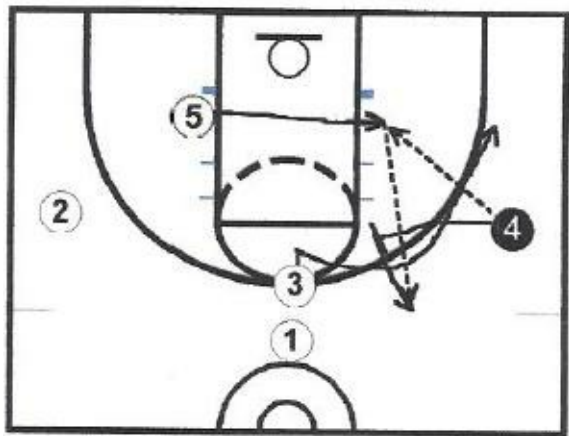


5 will now cross the lane and get a pass from 3 who screens for 4 to cut off of him and get a pass from 5 for a jump shot. 3 will rotate to the middle line and 4 rotates to the line on the right side.





The players rotate the same in this drill as in the previous two frames, but in this drill the 5 man passes to the screener stepping back behind the three point line after screening.

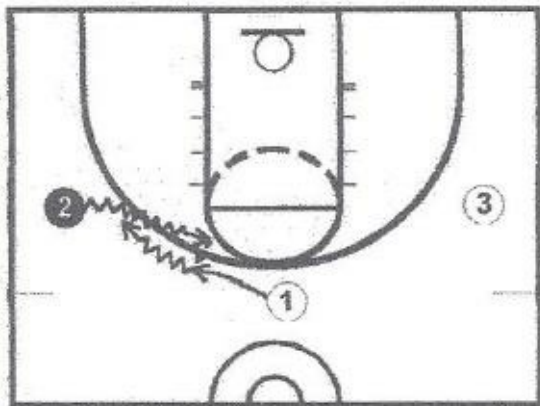


5 crosses the lane again and we do this same thing as in the previous three frames. The extra postman (6 in these drills) will be the rebounder and he will pass the ball to the wings when he gets the ball.

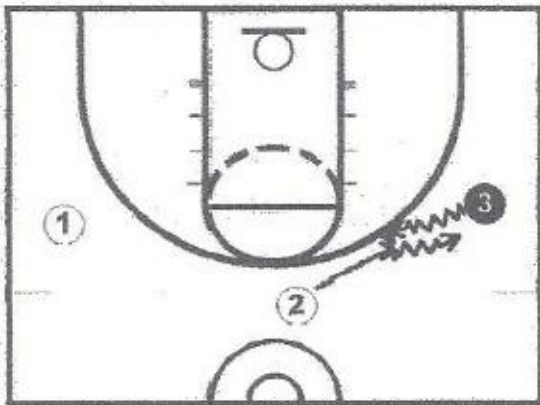
**GENERAL COMMENTS:** You can add another postman standing out of bounds under the goal to rotate with 5 if you would like to. You can also work on the backdoor. Two balls are needed in this drill (left and

right sides).

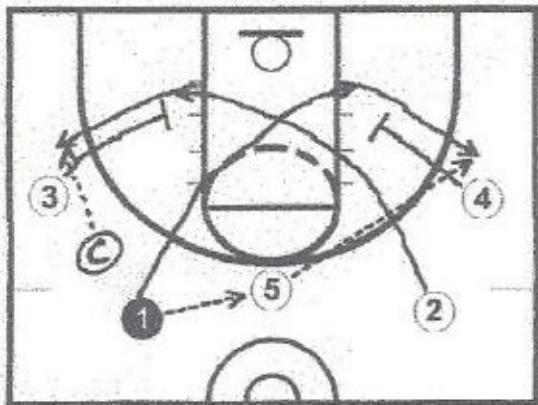
# Princeton Drills-2



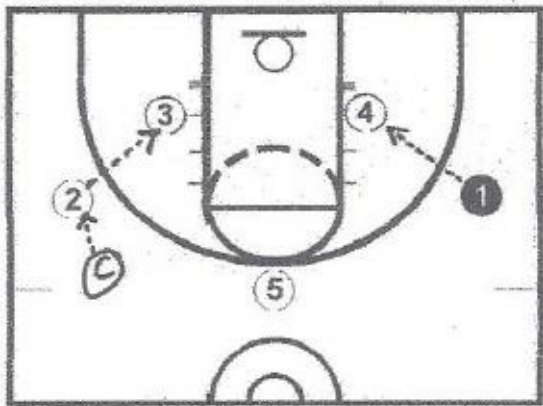
There are three lines in this drill, 2 dribbles to the middle and gives a hand off to 1 who takes a dribble or two and shots a jump shot. The shooter becomes the rebounder. 1 will rotate to his left.



3 also has a ball and in this frame we will have the same action as the previous frame. 3 will rotate to the middle line and 2 to the right line. The shooter is the rebounder.



High Post Drill; See High Post Play, this is the same action. In this frame the coach will pass to 1 for a jump shot. The players will rotate to their right at the end of the shots.



This starts with the same action as the previous frame except we have 1 and 2 feed 3 and 4 posted up. After the shots the players will rotate. You can add another postman to rotate with 5 in this drill.

**GENERAL COMMENTS:** In first two frames, you can practice the backdoor off of the handoff action. In the last two frames, you can run this drill with two groups if you would like to instead of rotating to the right.





# Author



At age eleven Coach Duane Silver knew he wanted to teach the game of basketball. While growing up in Central Missouri he spent many hours studying and playing basketball. After coaching seven years in Missouri, and moving to Waco Texas in 1977 to coach at La Vega High School, he compiled:

- 493 wins in 29 seasons
- 8 district championships
- 6 regional finalists

- 9 time coach of the year

Since retiring in 1999, Coach Duane Silver has been involved in more of the business side of basketball. He is co-founder of CoachSilver.com where he shares his expertise and experience in basketball. Coach Silver is also available to meet with area coaches for consultations.

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DUANE SILVER**

# Late Game Situation Playbook: Full Court and Half Court

Part 2 – Going Deeper Kentucky Offense Original Rules and Sets

Part 1 - Going Deeper Kentucky Offense Original Rules and Sets

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The Gun (by Shoot-a-Way) Half and Full Court Shooting Drills

Zone and Man to Man Out of Bounds Plays

The Best Zone Quick Hitters in the World

Team and Individual Shooting Drills

Jerry Tarkanian's 3 Out 2 In Pressure Offense and Fast

Kansas's 3 Out 2 In Motion Ball Screening Offense

6 Best Man to Man Sets and 6 Best Zone

“Spots” A Team Offense for SUPER SHOOTER

Press Package: How to Press on Made and Missed  
Shots

The Kentucky Dribble Drive Motion Offense

The “2 – 3” Zone Defense “Rules and Drills”

Motion Offense Players Can Understand

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