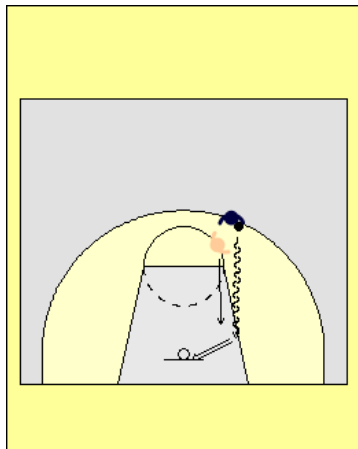
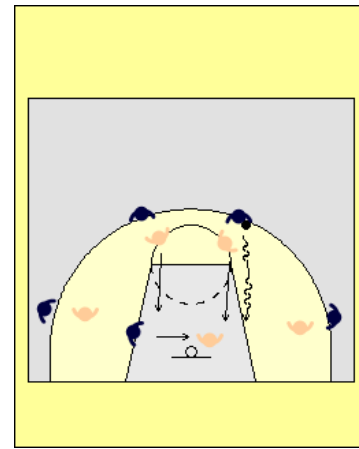


How the three point shots influence lay ups

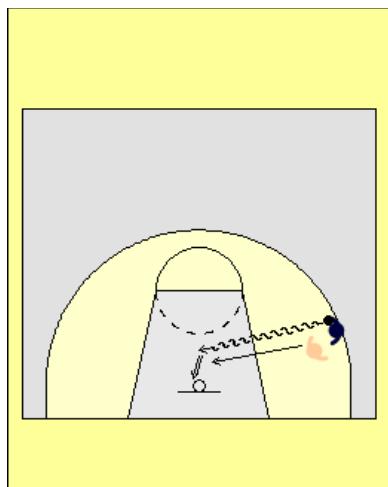
One of the things I like to observe at World Championships is the skills and concepts that the top players and countries are using. I then like to project if it is a trend or just a fad. I have already mentioned in a previous blog the importance of the three point shot. It cannot be emphasized enough how the ability of players to make this shot has changed the way many teams now play the game. The threat of the three point shooter has impacted the way in which teams defend on the perimeter. Because of this, the type of lay up that teams get has changed. Teams will not give you the open lay up or the open three point shot. They want to force you to score an odd angle lay up or over the top of a big help defender.



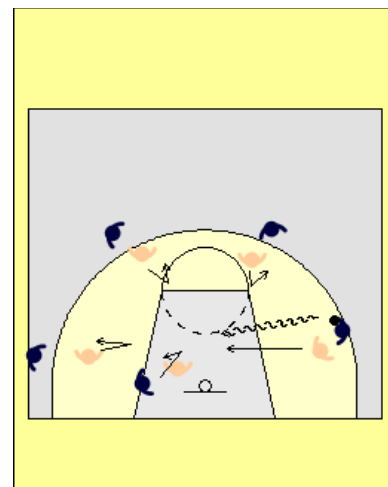
This angle of lay up is most prevalent in the higher levels of play. The player cannot turn the corner to get to the rim.



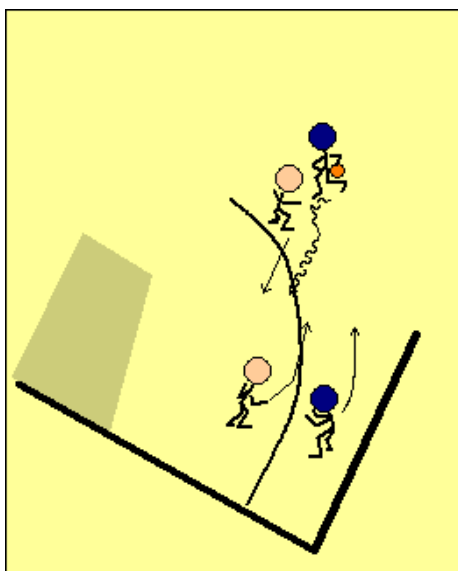
The reason is that teams will not help off the shooter in the corner. Usually a help defender slides over to take away the front of the rim. Another player drops to help the helper.



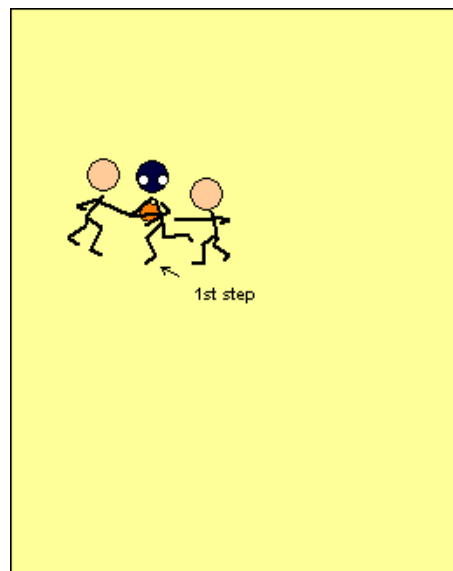
This is the other angle lay up that you will get. You are going across the face of the basket.



Again, it is because teams will not help off the three point shooters, but will slide a helper to the front of the rim.



The player defending on the wing or corner offensive player very rarely plays a deny position. In most cases he was in a sag open stance. The purpose was to be in the drive line and discourage penetration. If the pass was made to the wing it was a short close out to be in position to take away the shot and also to force the ball in the desired direction.



The offensive player was not discouraged by the sagging wing defender. He would start his drive to the basket. As the wing defender came, the offensive player would protect the ball like a running back in football. This prevented the ball from being stripped. He would split the defenders with his first step in the lay up. It was important to pick the ball up at the right time to prevent the travel.



With his second step the player is by the defenders and into the air. From the position he can shoot a runner, extend for the underhand scoop lay up or pass to an open player. Yes, he jumps in the air and then makes a decision. Now, I now this goes against every TV analysts in North American basketball. They are always quick to comment when the player commits a turnover when jumping in the air to pass. They never comment on the ten other times when the player makes a great pass by using this manoeuvre.

In every team sport the defence will always adapt to the offence. Luckily, there are some coaches who allow players to experiment with new found ways to break down the defence. In most cases it goes against conventional thinking. The old guard claims that they would never allow their players to use such a careless and high risk manoeuvre. I still remember watching a player from the University of Manitoba use a spike serve in an exhibition match against Dalhousie University that

was hosted at my old high school. This was back in the early to mid 1980's. He was one of the first players in the world to perfect the technique. In fact we were advised to come see this unreturnable serve. Yes, he did hit it into the net on occasion, but more often than not he scored a point or forced a poor return. All I know is that after watching that performance every male volleyball player in our school was practicing that serve when the coach was not watching. Now a day you would be laughed out of volleyball if you do not use a spike serve. In order to score points the servers had to learn to take a greater risk. Just by putting the ball in play you allowed your opponent to set up an easy attack. The same was true in basketball back in the 1940's when players started using the one hand shot as opposed to the two handed shot. In the 1950's it was the jump shot. These changes were risky at first, but as players practiced and perfected the technique they became the norm. As defence improves offence is always forced to find a way to beat it. We would have been subbed out to the game, when I was in high school, if we had put the ball between the legs when dribbling. It was only after a player named McGee showed up at UPEI, for one brief year, were players in the Maritimes allowed to use a spin dribble. He showed that it could be an unstoppable offensive weapon. You must remember that there was no basketball on TV during this time. When I first started coaching girls basketball in the early 1980's I was told that girls could not shoot jump shots or block shots. This was not the case, it was just that no one had showed them how and there were no role models to show the way.

Getting back to jumping to pass. I am not saying that we should have every young player jumping to make passes. Younger players need to learn the basic fundamental skills. As they grow and become stronger there are times when the only way to make a pass is to jump. It is very difficult to defend when the player making use of the skill has the strength and decision making skills to go with it.