



Strategies / tactics are appropriate for the abilities of the athletes and FIBA rules.

Understanding the FIBA game

Many of our coaches started playing the game with no shot clock. If not, the coach was coached by someone who grew up without the clock. These means there are reminisces of the no shot clock era in how the game is taught. This is a touchy topic for many coaches because they feel it comes down to philosophy. I agree that there are many different ways to play the game, but coaches need to be able to:

- Articulate why they do what they do.
- Does their style of play meet the demands of the FIBA game?
- Teach this system of play to the players in the allotted time available.

Simply put can your players execute the skills of the game at a higher speed?

Phases of the shot clock

We have broken the clock down into three distinct phases:

- Early – first six seconds. This is the player's time. We want them to attack to create a high percentage scoring opportunity.
- Mid – middle twelve seconds. This is the coach's time. This is when the team will work together to execute the team offence.
- Late – the last six seconds. This is the player's time. All players need to be aware of the clock and look to create or take scoring opportunities.

In each of these phases your player need to be able to:

- Initiate – start the phase. This only done by a specialist or can all players start the phase is the need arises.
- Point of attack – some method of breaking down the defence. Do the players do this with have a set pattern? Is it based on concepts? What is behind the play?
- Finish – what shots are you willing to take within this phase. Will you allow a contested shot early or only in the late clock phases.

Early Clock

Offence starts when the team gains possession of the ball [rebound (offensive or defensive), inbounds after a made basket (run the baseline), Inbounds after a violation or foul (cannot run, can be sideline or baseline) or a turnover or steal].

This now begins the **Early Clock** segment of the offence. The actual time may vary based on

- The skills level of your players,
- What the defence does to slow you down or disrupt your offence,
- The philosophy of the coach.

The shorter it is the more time you will have later in the clock.

Backcourt

You must get the ball over half in eight seconds. The more players that can initiate the early clock and can attack the basket the fewer problems you will have in getting the ball down the floor. Problems that occur:

- Easy to pressure one player
- Press breaks that go east west vs. North / South
- Ability to throw long and perform skills at speed
- Can you flow from press break into offence or do you need to set it up.

The easiest or highest percentage shot in basketball is the uncontested lay up. Early in the clock, the way to create this is by quick transition or to out run your opponent to the rim. This can also be created by forcing turnovers that leave an open basket. Various presses and traps are designed with this in mind. Since it is one of the easiest ways to score, it is also one of the easiest things for the defence to stop. Often with younger players, who do not handle the ball well, you see the blow out because of the turnover that lead to easy scores. As skills levels improve, you see fewer turnovers that lead to uncontested baskets.

The next way to score is by someone going 1 on 1. The reason I say 1on 1 before a 2-1 is that if the player with the ball does not attack. You very rarely create the advantage situation. Some coaches will only allow players to attack 2-1 or 3-1 advantage situations. Others may only allow certain players to go 1 on 1 early in the clock. This is where philosophy starts to come into play. With the NCAA 35 second clock and the 30-second clock many teams would still run what is called a secondary fast break. This involves all five players. With the 24-second clock, it is not as common, but still can be used as long as players can flow into it without disruption. This is a harder thing to do. It requires rhythm (timing and spacing), communication and higher skills. All this adds up to time in practice. This is where a coach must decide if it is appropriate for the level, he/she coaches. At a young age this time is better spent on skill development than having the players run a perfectly timed secondary break.

The coach must clearly communicate what shots are acceptable during this time.

Mid Clock

One of the keys to the 24-second shot clock is flow. Moving from one part of the offence to the other should be seamless or immediately. We do not want disruption to the flow. If you have more than one disruption per possession you will struggle to have a positive possession.

- Disruption
 - Fumbles
 - Poor spacing
 - Poor timing of cuts, screen
 - Failure to look at the basket or to see the open opportunity
 - Freezing the ball
 - Failure to be or regain balance when you have the ball
 - Pressure by the opponent that takes you out of your pattern, spacing etc.

Once disruptions occur can your team recover and save the possession.? Defensively coaches work diligently to find ways to disrupt your flow. If it is discovered that you cannot flow from a press break into your mid clock offence effectively, be prepared to face lots of pressure.

- Can you call the play when auditory communications is limited, a noisy gym. Communicate early and echoed to all
- Players need to get to position without delay.
- The play or action must fit the amount of time on the clock. Many NCAA plays have movements at the first that are not of an urgent nature. The key part to the play occurs after 15 to 20 seconds. These types of plays may not work.

Set plays are the easiest to teach. The coach can control the movement by the players and tailor the play to meet the player's skill level. You may get a quick benefit early in a game and early in the season from plays as you can catch the defence off balance. As the game and season progress the opponents adjust. The solution often becomes more plays. What happens when the set breaks down? Pre-shot clock you could use the famous words; "set up". This is not always an option. Too often, when a team drives out of a set, if the person who receives the pass (when the defence helped) does not immediate shoot, the offence cannot continue to play. It becomes confusion with the coach calling for the players to set up and the players feeling the pressure of the dwindling clock.

Continuities are also a common way that offence is taught. It usually allows for movement that helps break down the defence. Often players do not know how they are supposed to score out of the continuity. They become more concerned with the pattern.

Conceptual offences are based on teaching the players concepts of play. Motion is an example. Players learn concepts of spacing, passing and cutting, penetration principles and screening.

In all offences players need to know the **point of attack**. For example when running a passing and cutting game are the players looking to score from:

- Cuts to the rim.
- Off shots from the cuts.
- From taking advantage of a positive match up, (This is when the offence feels they now have a weaker defender. The match up may be by player or by position on the floor.)
- Off a bad close out.
- When a good seal can occur inside.
- Off the penetration principles that occur when a player goes 1 on1 from the perimeter.
- Off the post play principles when someone has the ball inside.

Coaches must help players understand the point of attack. Are you attacking:

- The weakness of the defence, (poor help rotations)
- The weakness of a specific defender, (#4 cannot guard in the post)
- Through the strength of a specific player, (Get it to Johnny, he can over power #4 in the post)
- Through the strength of your offence, (We want to run the lanes; it causes problems for the opposition.)
- Through a position on the floor, (We want to attack the middle with penetration).

What is behind your initial offence?

This concept is about **reads and counters** to the set or continuity. It is also about when a play breaks down can your players continue to flow on offence. With no shot clock or a long clock, you had the opportunity to “**set it up**”. This is difficult to do with the short clock. Here the coach must allow the players to make decisions. This requires different skills, decision-making and therefore the way we practice. It is also harder to scout and defend.

Some coaches' philosophy is to run **isolations**. One way is off positive match ups. For example, a team sets a screen in the offence. When they see the switch, they now get the ball to the perimeter player who can beat the slower interior player who is now guarding. The other method is to get the ball to your superior player in a certain spot and let him/her create. In general, this is a common practice in the NBA, but one must remember that the defensive three-second rule in the NBA aids this offensive practice. It also requires tremendous skills to do this constantly for entire game. FIBA tends to use 1 on 1 to create 2-1. For example; the player catches the ball and immediate attacks the help defence. This creates a 2-1 where the kick is available if the help defender commits.

Two-player game

Many coaches like to finish their sets with a two-player game. For most, this means ball screen.

Late Clock

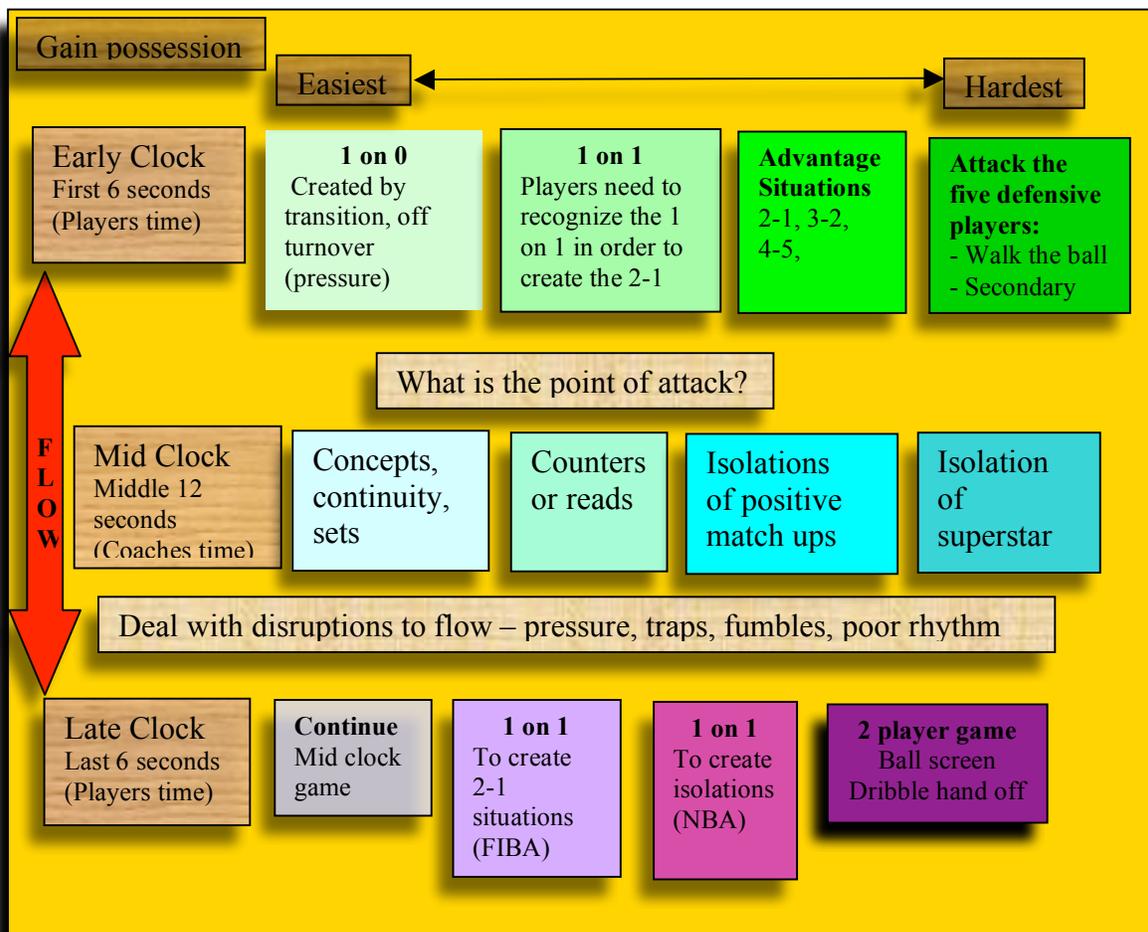
Before the shot clock teams could continue to run their mid clock concepts until they got their best player the best shot. End of clock or late clock only happened four times. It now happens in the many of possessions. Some coaches philosophy is to run their mid clock game. They have timed each play to the exact second. This will work vs. weaker opponents, but is vulnerable to disruption. To counter this coaches have the end of their offence end with their best player receiving the ball for the isolation or two-player game.

The next option is for players to go 1 on 1. As described above, this may be when the positive match up has occurred or off of isolation in a particular spot. The problem is that you may not have a choice. Every players needs to know how to create a shot in late clock. They need to be able to initiate the end of clock action. This is why some coaches go to two-player game late in the clock. They may run a ball screen for a perimeter or have an interior use a dribble hand off. Again, these kinds of concepts require high skill level and plenty of practice time.

Many teams defensively are getting very good at trapping or denying your best player late in the clock. These kinds of defences expose players who cannot score or create a score for another player. This is why attacking the basket, spacing, penetration principles and pass cut fill are so important in the development of all players. They are the building blocks off end of clock offence. It also helps if everyone can pass and shoot the ball.

2 for 1

Very few coaches make use of the 2-1 strategy at the end of quarters, half time and end of game. If there is 40 seconds left in the game clock, by pushing the ball and taking a good quick shot you will end up with the last possession. This gives you two possessions as opposed to one to score. It must be practiced if you are going to use it.



Drills / Games Approach

2-1 to 3-2 – load the drill

- Normal
- No pass inside 3pt line
- No 3 point shots
- No contested shots

- Only 3 pt shot off pass pass

Flow

- Korean
- Serbian Tip
- Flow (half court)
- Inbounds
- Steal – tips
- Toss
- Dribble up

Rugby – break out dribble – attack

Ultimate – passing, moving (load in no square up, no balance, no vision)

Hockey – advance the ball

1 second basketball – movement, decision making

No two people in same space – movement off penetration