

Teaching the Downscreen

A Downscreen is an action a player makes without the ball to set up another team mate by blocking the path of a defender with his body. It is called a Downscreen due to the fact that the screener moves down towards the baseline to set the screen.

The down screen can involve:

1. One screener - Downscreen
2. Two screeners - Double and Staggered Downscreens
3. Three screeners - Triple Stagger Downscreen.

The angle of the screen is normally set with the screeners back to the top of the key, this indicates to the cutter where he should be cutting to.

The Downscreen is a staple of Motion Offence is a great starting point to teach the setting and use of screens to junior players around the age of 11.

Universal Screening Rules

1. The screener must call his teammates name to initiate the screening action.
2. The screener sprints to set the screen, stopping with a jump stop.
3. The screener must then bend at the knees and spread their feet to create a wide screen.
4. The screener must set his screen and remain stationary while the cutter uses the screen.
5. The screeners back will generally be pointing to the area you are trying to get the cutter open.
6. Correct angles are key to setting and using screens.
7. The screener must separate once the cutter uses the screen - he must create space from himself and the cutter. This is normally in the opposite direction from the cutter.
9. The cutter must move into the line of the screen, this means moving in line with the man setting the screen.
10. The cutter must make a decision on which type of cut to use once getting to the line of the screen.
11. When cutting off the screen the cutter should make contact with the screener to not allow any space for the defence to slip through the screen.
12. Cutter should call his cut, this helps the screener decide where he must move to after the screen.
13. The screener will often be the open player as the cutter demands immediate attention.
14. Use the "One in, One Out" theory, in relation to separation after the screen. If the cutter attacks the hoop or key the screener will flare or pop to the perimeter, if the cutter moves to the perimeter the screener will seal for a post feed, duck in or flash the key.
15. The passer must attempt to read the intentions of the cutters defender, if for instance he looks to cheat under the screen early, this will cue the cutter to flare, which cues the passer to dribble the ball to shorten the pass.

Straight Cut



If the defence gets caught on the screen then the cutter will "straight cut" off the screen to catch the ball around the FT line.



The straight cut is also used in offence where the initial Downscreen is to set up a second action or to keep the weakside busy. In this instance the cutter would straight cut to get to the next pass or point in the offence or to keep the key free from another simultaneous action on the ball side.

The screener will look to roll, post or space depending on what type of offence you are running. For instance if you were running a High Low 3 Out 2 In Motion Offence the screener will be a Power Forward or Center so he would stay in the post or screen for the other inside player. If you are running a 4 or 5 Out Motion you might like the screener to space out behind the 3pt line to keep the floor spread.

Back Cut



If the defender try's to fight over the top of the screen or jump switch the screen early then a back cut should be used with the cutter going behind the screen instead of over top.

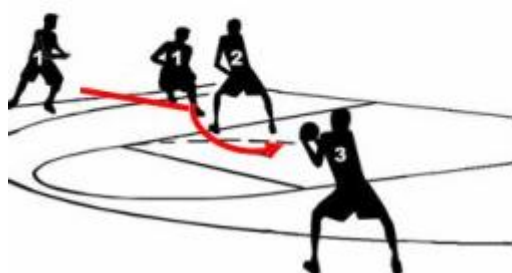


The back cut is a great way to relieve pressure against an over-aggressive opponent. The screener "should find the ball" after the back cut by going back to where he came from or flashing to the ball if his defender has to help on the back cut.

Curl Cut



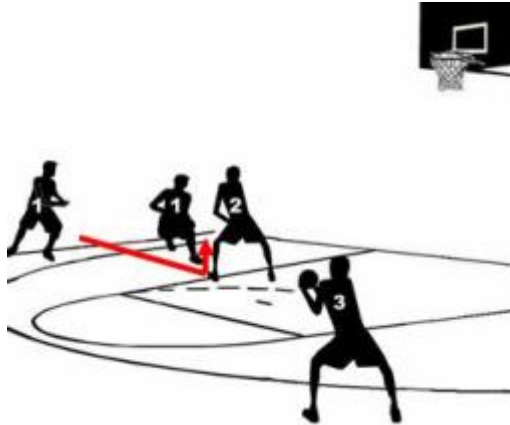
When the defender tries to follow the cutter from behind ("trail" or "lock and trail") the cutter should curl around the screen towards the basket ensuring that he makes contact with the screener to not allow any room for the defender to squeeze through. The curl and the back cut put more pressure on the defence as the cut attacks the rim.



Some teams will often use the "Lock and Trail" method to ensure that shooters get no space to catch and shoot. If they are well coached the defender on the screener will step out into the cutters path to bump his curl. This will

give the screener a slight period of time unguarded where he can flash the ball-side elbow or pop back to where he came from for a jump shot or close out opportunity.

Flare Cut



If the defender is waiting for the cutter on the other side of the screen then the screener should not use the screen and "flare" back away from the screen and defender. The screener will now "re-screen" and adjust their body so they are now facing the ball with their back now pointing to the sideline/corner. The passer must then skip pass the ball or take a dribble to shorten the pass.

The screener options:

1. If he is a post player he can step in toward the hoop on the flight of the ball to look to get a paint catch.
2. If he is a perimeter player he may pop back to where he came from - normally the guard spot.
3. If his defender does not stay between him and the basket he may duck in or flash the key towards the ball.
4. If his defender loses vision while trying to help the cutters defender he may back cut to the rim for a bounce or lob pass.