Princeton Offense
“Chin Series” – Pete Carril

The “Chin Series”
The Princeton offense is known for wide spacing and back door cuts. The “chin series” is consistent with these principles but designates a specific flavor of action. This action focuses on reversing the ball looking for shuffle and UCLA cuts off the high post. Princeton would signal this specific action by having the guard bringing the ball up the floor rub his off hand up against his chin a few times in succession.

Spacing – Post Flashes High
The Princeton offense utilizes four perimeter players and one post player. There is a lot of structured action around low post play. In the chin series, however, the post player flashes high and occupies the high post area. The position numbers used here to denote spacing are somewhat arbitrary. Pete Carril never believed in numbered positions. He talks guards, forwards, and centers. Regardless, all four players on the perimeter need to be skilled perimeter players. The reason the 4 is shown up top here is a post player usually trails on the break.

The Shuffle Cut
The shuffle cut is the core action of the Princeton “chin series”. The main focus is on swinging the ball back and forth and making shuffle cuts off the high post (see figures below).

Guards look to swing the ball and cut off the high post. The shuffle cut should primarily be made on the outside shoulder of the screener (since the defender jumps middle to help.)

Many times 2’s defender will jump to help on the shuffle cutter. In these cases 2 should position himself for a skip pass and possible three point scoring opportunity. The shuffle cutters fills out to opposite side.

If the shuffle cutter does not receive the ball, he fills out to the opposite corner (ball side). The high post then flashes to the elbow looking for a jumper or some inside out action. If overplayed, he has a backdoor opportunity.
Shuffle Cut Continuity

Once the first shuffle cut has been executed and no scoring options were available (via shuffle cut or high post), the ball is moved back out top and the offense looks to initiate another shuffle cut situation with different personnel. The shuffle cut can be initiated from either side depending on how the ball moves back to the top. (see diagrams below).

In this case, the ball is passed back out and dribbled across to reset spacing. The high post always moves with the dribble out top. You are now in the same initial position to swing the ball and shuffle but with different players.

In this case, the ball could not be passed back out. The player with the ball then dribbles directly at the player being denied. He cuts to the basket and out the opposite side. You are now in position to shuffle from opposite side.

This just shows the shuffle cut from the opposite side. This happens when the ball could not be passed back out and reversed. Otherwise the shuffle would be initiated from the same side again.

UCLA Cuts

A UCLA cut is initiated whenever you cannot swing the ball from side to side and the ball must be passed to a forward on the same side as the ball. Running a UCLA cut may cause the Princeton offense to transition from the “chin” series into their “low post play” series. This is an additional tape and topic.

The first option of the UCLA cut is to look for an immediate opportunity with the cutter. In some mismatch situations, you may want to look for post up opportunities here.

The high post pops out after setting the UCLA screen. If he is overplayed here, he can cut back door for the lob. If he gets the ball here, he looks to reverse the ball.

After reversing the ball, the high post will screen down and occupy low post. In this case, Princeton would then transition into their “low post play” series (another flavor of the offense).