

Rick Majerus Triangle and 2 Notes 4/25/10

This defense is not a staple of your defensive system

Meant instead to:

1. disrupt a great scorer
2. Take two great scorers out of the game and frustrate them
3. Junk up the game and slow the pace. Get a team out of their rhythm

Disruptor defense. Can't live on this defense. Most important thing about it is knowing when to go with it. The second most important thing is knowing when to get out of it.

Overview:

Take the two top shooters or scorers and take them out of the game by denying them the ball. One pass or one zone away from the ball, there's a total denial with vision on the ball. You want to be backdoored, because the help is there.

Attempt to do the following with two scorers:

1. Deny them the ball
2. When they get it, make them bounce it
3. Contest every shot
4. No concern for them beating you off the dribble

When two scorers come together via a handoff, a ball screen for each other, or a screen, the defensive players switch. On handoff or ball screen you want to "switch out".

When do you go to this defense:

1. To take away the hot hand.
2. To disrupt an offensive flow

George Karl used to say when his team scored and there was a three digit, or when they scored a three, they would go back to the triangle and 2. You can also do it on makes and misses, on substitutions, etc.

Most important thing is knowing who the third best shooter on the floor is. The third best shooter must be made to "dribble to a shot." That is our goal. Everyone on the floor needs to be conscious of whom the third best shooter is. If there are two more good shooters, this is not the defense to play. Like with any good zone, you want to have high hands and active hands.

You also want to be wide. The point of the zone must get into a stance with a wide base, high hands, and active hands. Must know who the best shooter is. As he closes to the best shooter, he must close out wide and make that player dribble to a shot.

When guarding the best shooter, get in wide base and make him dribble to a shot. Ideally his nose is in the shooter's chest, he has high hands and a wide base.

You want to have a defensive disruptor at the point of the triangle.

Defensive responsibilities:

1. When guarding one of the best scorers, get in total denial one pass away. Butt to the ball. Want to be back-doored. Frustrate the offensive player and don't let him get an easy catch.
2. If scorer gets the ball, close out and make him dribble to a shot. Never let him catch and shoot without a dribble. Level off the dribble.
3. Point of the triangle defender – find the next best shooter on the floor. Gets down in pistols and gaps. Travels on air time of the ball and closes out on next best shooter. Makes him dribble into a shot.
4. If the point of the triangle defender is matching up with a non-shooter, his triangle (pistols) can be deeper, and he can really look to help. Don't close out to a non-shooter. Walk out and level off his drive.
5. If the ball is ever passed by the two offensive men being played man-to-man (best scorers) defender goes back into full denial.
6. Close out to best shooter close enough to touch, contain on the dribble, have high hands. Make him dribble to a shot.
7. For a non-shooter, let him catch it anywhere he wants outside of the paint. Get a hand up late on the shot, look to "fake and fade". (Cat and mouse to get the shooter out of rhythm.)
8. Sometimes, you want to "play to a preferential hand or park on a preferential hand". Depends on personnel. If offensive player is "bankrupt" going left, get up an diagonal him in that direction. If he is adequate going left, park on his right toe on the closeout. If he is equally adept going left or right, close straight up with a wide base and make him dribble to a shot.
9. Only close to third best shooter to make him dribble to his shot when he 's in his range. Don't get the point of the triangle too far extended.
10. Point of the triangle has the responsibility of digging, and not getting gapped by penetration from on top. Supporting penetration to the middle of the floor.
11. Must train your players to defend with high, active hands.

The "Funnel" area of the court is two lines from the elbows to the old "hash marks" on both sidelines.

This splits the court up into three zones. The top is the funnel. Areas below the funnel outside the lane are called the "wings". In addition, the funnel, up top, has a line running through the middle of the floor from the foul line to the half-court circle. This is called the split line. Divides the court in half vertically.

12. If you are guarding man-to-man, and your man is two zones away from the ball, the rule is no one cuts below you to the rim, but you are out of denial. Instead you are one step off the line of the ball staying with stance and vision. If the man tries to cut in front of your face, deny.
13. If you are guard man-to-man one of the best scorers, body up and go over all screeners.

14. On pass and screen away from the top, point of the triangle looks to bump any curl cut. Be physical and body up.
The vulnerability of this defense, like all zones, is that there are no definitive blockout responsibilities. Vulnerability is to the rebound.
15. The most essential element on all closeouts is to contain the dribble. You do not want to turn your body sideways and “be a swordsman” with one arm out. Instead stay square, wide, and have high hands.
16. We always want to front a low post. Be on top or in front.
17. Fourth and fifth best shooters have to hit two or three jumpshots before the coach should think about getting out of this defense.
18. Majerus likes on the ball defender to keep one foot forward defensively.
19. Any time the ball in the funnel, front the post hi-side, butt to the ball.
20. If there is a handoff between on the best scorers and another player, go over the top. Body up and body through. Point of the zone protects against dribble penetration out of the handoff.
21. When cutters run the baseline, communicate. “cutter coming through, strong!”

In transition, man-to-man defenders get back and pick up their men right away to avoid the open three. Run back with vision, talk, pointing and talking.

Point of the zone gets back and guards the rim in transition, then gets back out to the point as bigs run back and form the triangle.

Personnel and match-ups: Point of the triangle is critical. You want your smartest, best defender there. Your bigs are usually down on the blocks. If you have a bad defender, you probably want to hide him on one of the scorers.

If a ball screen is set by of the triangle defenders’ corresponding man, they must get up on the screen, call it, and double it. The pop and roll will probably not beat you, the mismatch will not beat you – it is the open shot that beats you.

At times, you must slide and rotate the triangle in order to close-out on the third best shooter. You must rotate over and out, and v-back to guard the blocks. Don’t leave the ball-side post player. Rotate up to the top area from opposite block.

Make the non-shooter finish at the rim. Don’t close out to him and leave an open pass for a layup.

When you are mismatched on a blockout, focus on making and maintaining contact, and “bodying out”. Don’t concern yourself with the rebound.

Don’t hug two zones away from the ball because you will lose him and you are more vulnerable to getting screened.

When best scorers screen for each other, switch and deny.

When the ball screener comes of your area, call the screen and double the ball-handler until he picks up his dribble. No concern for the slip, roll, etc. The minute the ball-handler picks up his dribble, zone players sprints out of the zone and fills a spot in the zone.

Don't front the post when there is a "fake and fade" guy (cat and mouse on non-shooter) in front of you on the ball. The guy on the ball helps keep the ball out of the post in that scenario.

Majerus' rules: On offense you see your man (read him), on defense, you see the ball.

The worst thing you can do defensively is be indecisive. You must talk, point and push your teammates around to get matched up or aligned.

Always try to force an extra pass. Make them make another one with good closeouts.

Four shooters on the floor with the fourth shooter having an adept middle game, or a really good passing four or five man, and you don't want to run this defense.

As a breakdown drill to work on sliding the triangle, put two offensive players at the high elbows extended, one on the block. One of the players at the elbows in the third best shooter on the floor.

Play three on three. Post offensive player always tries to flash, always trying to post, always trying to rebound. Four and Five cannot set ball screens for each other, but can set ball screens for third best shooter.