



**ATTACKING ZONE
DEFENSES:**

**PRINCIPLES TO AVOID
GETTING STUCK**

**PICK
&
ROLL**



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Introduction

Few situations create as much offensive frustration as facing a well-organized zone defense.

The ball moves... but doesn't progress.

Players stay static.

Shots become forced.

And the offense loses rhythm.

Many teams try to attack zones through rigid plays or memorized movements. But the best solutions come from something much simpler: **spacing, ball movement, and intelligent occupation of interior spaces.**

This Pick & Roll provides a clear guide to teaching how to attack zone defenses through collective understanding rather than fixed automatisms.

The Problem: Attacking the Zone Without Principles

Common mistakes:

- Everyone wants to receive outside.
- Nobody occupies interior spaces.
- Slow ball circulation.
- Excessive dribbling.
- Poor weak-side occupation.

The result:

- The defense never shifts.
- No real advantages appear.
- The offense becomes predictable.

A zone defense is not broken only with speed.

It is broken by moving the defense and attacking spaces.

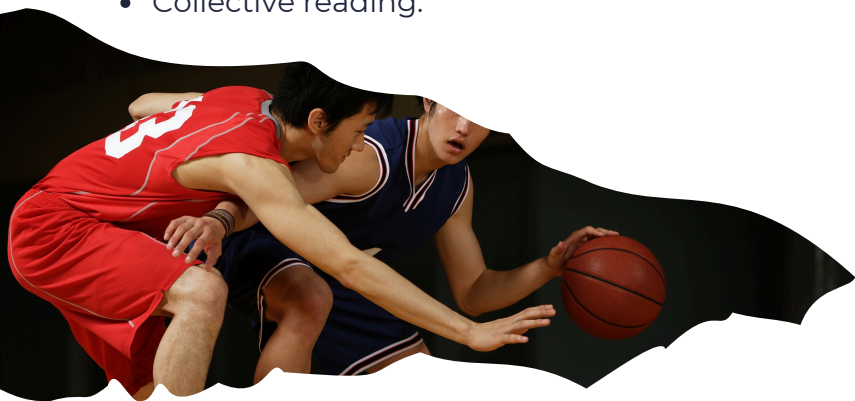
What a Zone Defense Tries to Do

Before attacking it, players must understand its objective:

- Protect the paint.
- Reduce penetration.
- Force difficult shots.
- Control spaces rather than players.

That's why attacking a zone requires:

- Patience.
- Good circulation.
- Collective reading.



**It's not about moving faster.
It's about occupying space better.**

Key Principles to Attack a Zone

1. Maintain Wide Spacing

The zone wants to stay compact.

The offense must:

- Stretch the corners.
- Separate defensive lines.
- Create hesitation in help defense.

Without spacing, the zone feels comfortable.

2. Move the Ball Before the Dribble

Dribbling allows the zone to reset.

Passing forces the defense to shift faster.

Objectives:

- Move the ball quickly.
- Reverse sides.
- Shift help defenders.

The ball must travel faster than the defense.



3. Occupy Interior Spaces

Most zones struggle when an offensive player appears:

- In the high post.
- Between defensive lines.
- Behind the first defensive layer.

That's where real advantages are created.



4. Attack Immediately After Receiving

Receiving the ball should not stop the offense.
After the catch:

- shoot,
- drive,
- pass,
- or collapse the defense.

Advantages disappear quickly.
They must be exploited immediately.

Key Spaces Against a Zone

High Post

Central space between defensive lines.
Allows the offense to:

- shift the defense,
- collapse help,
- create close-range opportunities.

Corners

Corners force the zone to stretch.
From there:

- open shots appear,
- baseline drives emerge,
- extra passes become available.

Weak Side

Zones are often late rotating after quick reversals.
Side-to-side movement is essential.

Drills to Teach Zone Offense

Drill 1 – 4v4 Without Dribbling vs Zone

- The offense can only progress through passing and movement.

Focus: spacing and quick circulation

Drill 2 – High Post Occupation

- Conditioned game where the offense must touch the high post before finishing.

Focus: playing between lines.

Drill 3 – Quick Side Reversal

- The possession can only finish after reversing the ball from one side to the other.

Focus: moving the defensive structure.

Drill 4 – 5v5 vs Real Zone Defense

- Defense plays 2-3 or 3-2.
- The offense plays freely but with clear objectives:
- spacing,
- high-post occupation,
- weak-side attack.

Focus: collective reading.

Common Mistakes

- ✗ Excessive dribbling.
- ✗ Everyone staying outside.
- ✗ Not attacking interior spaces.
- ✗ Slow circulation.
- ✗ Standing still after passing.

Zone defenses are not broken by individual actions.
They are broken by collective structure.

How to Teach It Without Overloading

You don't need 20 offensive systems.

Start with:

- 1.spacing,
- 2.circulation,
- 3.high-post occupation,
- 4.reaction after the pass.

Then variations can appear.

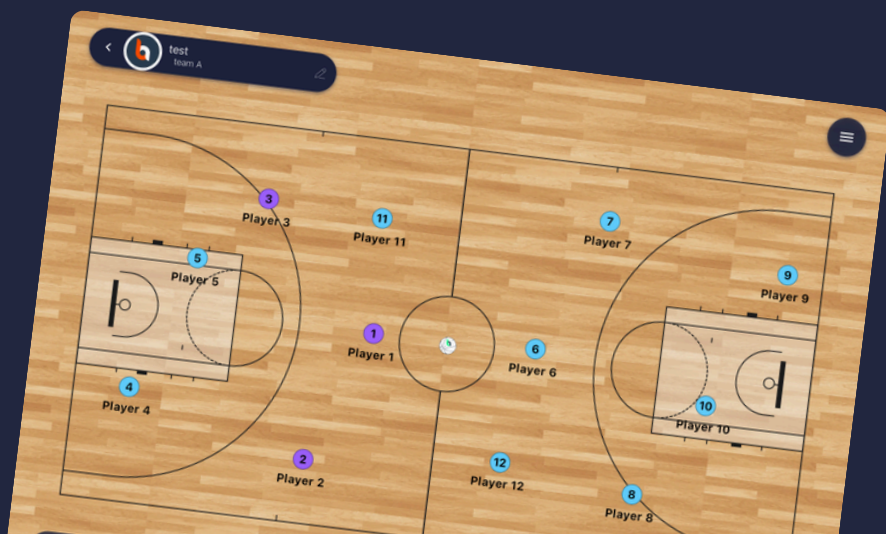
First understanding. Then automatisms.

Applying It with bcoach Basket

Con bcoach puedes:

- **Design specific drills** against zone defenses.
- **Tag exercises** by offensive principle.
- **Create structured** microcycle progressions.
- **Analyze spacing** and circulation.
- **Track offensive** behaviors during games.

The task creator allows you to visualize spacing and movements clearly and effectively.



CONCLUSION

Attacking a zone defense is not about memorizing plays.

It is about understanding space.
The teams that best attack zones:

- move the defense,
- occupy interior spaces,
- and maintain offensive continuity.

Spacing. Circulation. Reading.

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