



bcoach

CONTROLLING THE PACE:

**WHEN TO RUN AND WHEN
TO PLAY IN THE HALF COURT**

**PICK
&
ROLL**



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Introduction

In basketball, the team that plays the fastest does not always win.

Nor does the team that plays the slowest.

The winning team is often the one that understands when to accelerate and when to control the game.

Offensive pace is not simply about speed. It is about reading the game. It is about management. It is the ability to understand what the game needs at any given moment: pushing after a rebound, slowing down after a turnover, attacking an early advantage, or organizing a half-court offense when the team needs structure.

This Pick & Roll explores how to train offensive tempo decision-making so that players do more than execute—they learn how to manage the game.

What Does Controlling the Pace Mean?

Controlling the pace means collectively deciding:

- when to run,
- when to slow down,
- when to attack an early advantage,
- when to use more of the shot clock,
- when to punish an unorganized defense,
- and when to organize a half-court offense.

It is not about imposing one style all the time.

It is about recognizing the moment.

A mature team does not always play fast.

It plays at the pace that benefits it most.

The Problem: Confusing Speed with Good Offense

Many teams want to play fast but end up playing rushed.

Common mistakes:

- Running without a real advantage.
- Taking transition shots without balance.
- Failing to recognize whether the defense is organized.
- Committing turnovers due to excessive speed.
- Turning every possession into a race.

Speed is only useful if it creates an advantage.

If there is no advantage, running can quickly become chaos.



Principles for Deciding Offensive Tempo

1. Run When an Advantage Exists

After a rebound, steal, or poor defensive recovery, players must recognize:

- numerical superiority,
- spatial advantage,
- an unbalanced defense,
- an open player on the wing,
- or an unprotected basket.

If the advantage exists, run.

If it does not, organize.

2. Organize When the Defense Is Set

When the defense is already in position, forcing the pace often leads to poor shots.

In these situations, teams should:

- occupy space correctly,
- initiate offensive structure,
- move the ball,
- create mismatches,
- or attack through the pick & roll.

Not every possession should begin with urgency.

Read the Score and the Context

Pace also depends on the situation:

- If you are leading, you may need to be more selective with your shots.
- If you are trailing, you do not necessarily need to play faster—you need better possessions.
- If the opponent is fatigued, increasing the tempo may be beneficial.
- If your team is disorganized, slowing down may be the best option.

Tempo is also emotional management.



4. The Point Guard Is Not the Only Decision-Maker

Although the point guard often leads the pace, the entire team contributes:

- bigs run or seal,
- wings fill lanes,
- forwards recognize advantages,
- the bench communicates,
- and the whole team understands when to slow down.
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Tempo is a collective responsibility.

Drills to Train Pace Control

Drill 1 | Traffic Light Transition

Structure:	The team starts after a rebound or recovery. The coach gives a signal: • Green: run and finish quickly. • Yellow: run but look for the extra pass. • Red: slow down and organize a half-court offense.
Objective:	Train immediate adaptation of offensive tempo.
Coaching Focus:	Reading, communication, and lane occupation.

Drill 2 | 5-on-5 with Different Possession Rules

Structure:	During 5v5 play, some possessions must finish within 8 seconds, while others require at least 15 seconds before a shot can be taken.
Objective:	Learn to alternate between fast and controlled tempos.
Coaching Focus:	Decision quality rather than execution speed.

Drill 3 | Advantage or Set Offense

Structure:	After every recovery, the team has 4 seconds to determine whether a clear advantage exists. If it does, they attack in transition. If not, they organize in the half court.
Objective:	Prevent running for the sake of running.
Coaching Focus:	First pass, spacing, and recognition of superiority.

Drill 4 | Score-Based Game Scenarios**Structure:**

5v5 game with different score scenarios:

- Up by 6 with 2 minutes remaining.
- Down by 4 with 1 minute remaining.
- Tie game with the final possession.

Each situation requires a different pace strategy.

Objective:

Train tempo decisions in realistic game situations.

**Coaching
Focus:**

Emotional control, shot selection, and collective management.

Common Mistakes When Training Tempo

- ❌ Associating fast pace with good basketball.
- ❌ Never teaching when to slow down.
- ❌ Leaving all responsibility to the point guard.
- ❌ Failing to connect transition and half-court offense.
- ❌ Correcting only the shot result instead of the decision that led to it.
- ❌ Not simulating score-based situations.

Tempo is not corrected by shouting from the bench. It is trained through situations that force players to decide

How to Integrate It into Planning

A useful progression can be:

- Beginning of the week: transition drills and advantage recognition.
- Midweek: 5v5 games alternating between fast and controlled possessions.
- End of the week: score-based scenarios and time-management situations.

The goal is for players to constantly ask themselves:

- What does the game need right now?
- That question changes the quality of every decision.

Applying It with bcoach Basket

With bcoach you can:

- **Design drills specifically** focused on tempo control.
- **Tag exercises** as “tempo,” “transition,” “half-court offense,” or “game management.”
- **Create progressions** from transition situations to contextualized 5v5 play.
- **Track offensive decisions** according to score and game context.
- **Use the task creator** to represent realistic possession and tempo scenarios.

With bcoach Basket, pace control becomes a trainable, visible, and measurable concept.



CONCLUSION

Controlling the pace does not mean playing slowly.

Nor does it mean running all the time.

It means understanding the game.

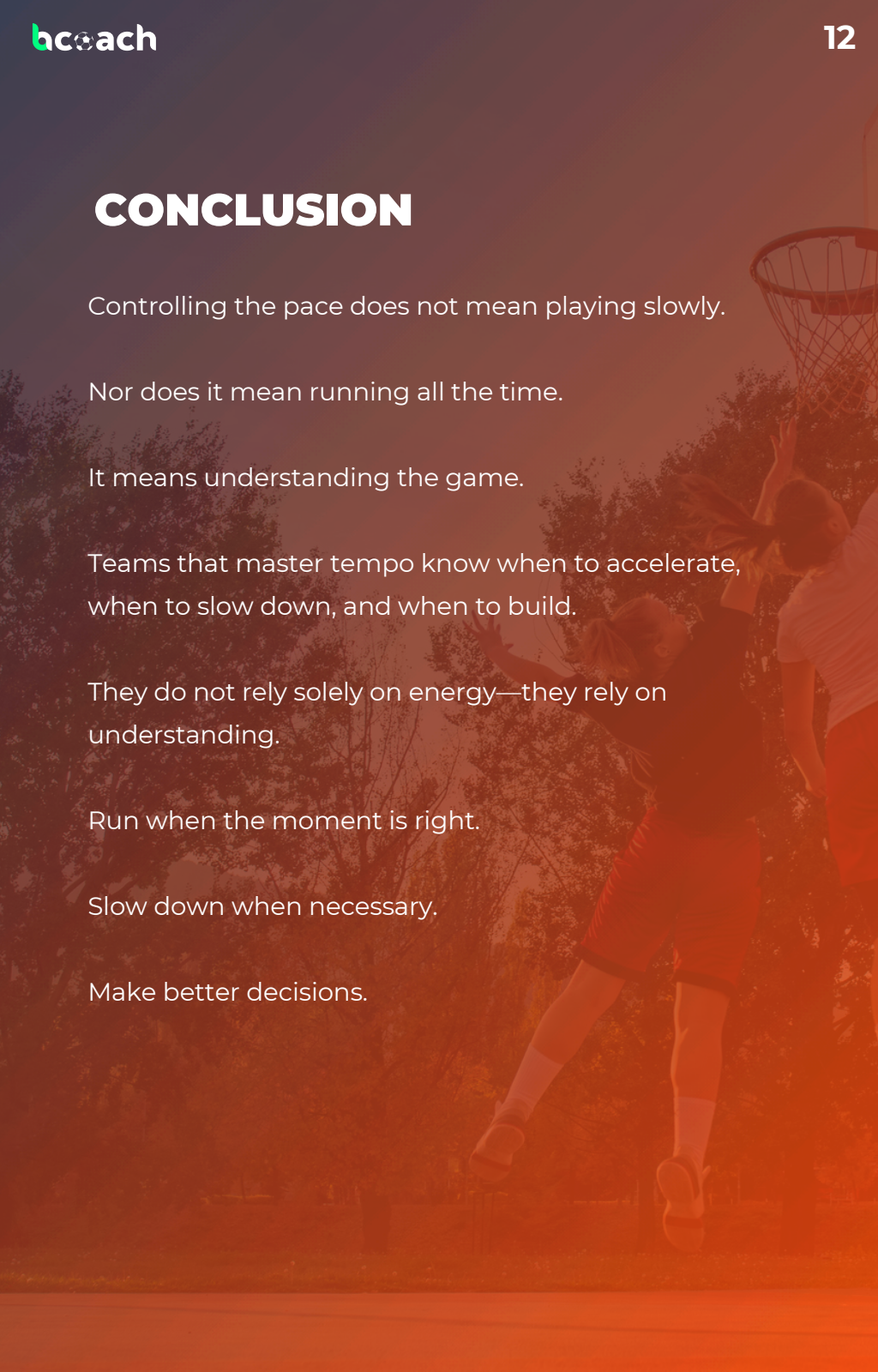
Teams that master tempo know when to accelerate, when to slow down, and when to build.

They do not rely solely on energy—they rely on understanding.

Run when the moment is right.

Slow down when necessary.

Make better decisions.



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