

ASSIGN AN ASSISTANT TO RESEARCH RULEBOOK

# BASKETBALL COACH WEEKLY

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◀ JOHN BEILEIN HAS USED  
THE 1-3-1 DURING HIS CAREER

**'ANTICIPATION'  
DRILLS TEACH  
INSTINCT**

## BEAT BIGGER TEAMS

**A 1-3-1 ZONE HELPS  
EVEN THE ODDS**

### **TRANSFERS**

- > **HOW COLLEGE COACHES  
VIEW POTENTIAL RECRUITS**
- > **LOOKING FOR LOYALTY AT  
YOUTH, HIGH SCHOOL LEVELS**

**'PISTON' DRILL SHOWS POSITIONING, ENCOURAGES COMMUNICATION**

# Looking For Loyalty



## Basketball Coach Weekly Issue 107

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## Sideline Stories

**A**s the money grows in big-time college and professional basketball, and as parents become more actively involved at the high school and youth levels, “loyalty” as an entity seems to be fading.

Coaches are fired more regularly these days. A win-right-now mentality is prevalent across the board. This way of thinking has seeped into the lower levels of basketball as players now bypass loyalty in favor of improving their exposure, scholarship chances, and probability of winning.

**“A range of outcomes ranging from valuable life lessons as well as long-term opportunities are sacrificed ...”**

Bert DeSalvo, who recently didn't have his contract renewed as head women's coach at Southern Connecticut State University, knows this scenario all too well. He wrote for *Basketball Coach Weekly* a few weeks ago about how to handle yourself when you lose your job. He also provided this week's article on page 6 about the issue of player transferring (between high school or multiple AAU programs) and how it's viewed by college coaches.

DeSalvo also discussed the transfer phenomenon with a couple of AAU program directors to get their perspective on the topic.

“Loyalty matters ... it's something everybody wants, but too few give,” say Ulysses Garcia and Heather Glazen,

directors of CT Attack, an AAU girls basketball program in Connecticut. “In this fast-paced, instant gratification, digital era, families are often quick to decide the grass is greener elsewhere, and as a result, a range of outcomes ranging from valuable life lessons as well as long-term opportunities are sacrificed.

“When adversity strikes or distractions occur, many families choose to just move on to the perceived next-best or more comfortable option. When these things happen, kids miss out on life lessons including self-assessment, pushing through adversity, valuing loyalty, developing grit, etc. and begin to develop habits of ‘moving on’ instead of ‘working through.’ At the college level, the challenges are greater and the stakes are higher, and qualities including loyalty and resilience are valued.”

Joe Ticotsky, the director of CT Starters, also an AAU girls basketball program in Connecticut, comes at the topic from a slightly different angle but delivers the same conclusion.

“Nowadays, college coaches have no choice but to recruit players that have played for multiple clubs during their AAU careers, since there are so few players that stay with one club,” says Ticotsky. “And we have no choice but to take players that transfer from other clubs, since it's so prevalent. And, players transfer from one AAU club to another for a variety of good reasons (financial, more competitive team, better coaching) so it's not always a negative.

“But the players that end up playing for four or five different clubs over their AAU careers may be the types of players that never will be happy in college basketball and that's something college coaches need to look into when recruiting a player.”



**The best college coaches want players to show loyalty and stick with the program no matter the difficulties or odds**

## In this issue...

### 3 BEAT BIGGER TEAMS

When your team is too small to play man defense all the time, consider the 1-3-1 trap to remain competitive

### 4 ‘ANTICIPATION’ DRILLS FUEL DEFENSE

You need players in the 1-3-1 to play off instinct, repeatedly teach anticipation in practice with these drills

### 5 ‘PISTON’ DRILL PERFECTS 1-3-1

The Piston Drill is the most important one when teaching the 1-3-1 as it showcases positioning and communication

### 6 ENCOURAGE LOYALTY OVER TRANSFERRING

It should take extraordinary circumstances for players to switch between programs — educate players on the repercussions

## QUICK HITTER

Once again, there is a lesson to be learned from watching another sport. Almost everyone saw the Monday Night Football play from a couple weeks ago where K.J. Wright of the Seahawks intentionally batted a bouncing ball out of the end zone for a touchback.

But, the rule states players cannot intentionally bat a ball out of bounds.

## ASSIGN RULEBOOK TO ASSISTANT

Wright said afterward he didn't know the rule. At the time on the field, it seemed as if no one else knew the rule either. It wasn't a challengeable play but if Detroit's coaching staff understood the rule, then they may have had a better chance of having the call overturned.

The same holds true for you. I get it. This is a busy time of year getting to know your players, possibly committing

an ever-rotating practice schedule to memory and doing the hundreds of other things in preparation for the reason ... but if you didn't spend the offseason getting to know the nuances of your state's rulebook, it might be time to assign this task to an assistant.

This builds trust in a member of your staff and allows you to focus on other immediate-need tasks.



# Beat Bigger Teams

There are those seasons when your team simply is too small to play man defense all the time — the 1-3-1 offers an alternative provided you have the proper personnel

**S**ome coaches live and die by man defense. Nothing shakes them from it. Other coaches sprinkle zone into their man philosophy, simply to give the opposition a different look.

Then, there are coaches who primarily run zones. There aren't as many of them, but they have proven there is more than one way to win a basketball game.

Michigan's John Beilein has won 642 games in his career. He's amassed a record of 166-110 in eight seasons at the University of Michigan and qualified for the NCAA Tournament for the four seasons prior to last year.

Beilein isn't a strict zone coach. He plays to his personnel and some years you'll see a Beilein-led squad in mostly man defenses. But, for a stretch several years ago, Beilein was associated with the 1-3-1 zone trap, as he fielded teams

that struggled facing larger opponents.

It typically requires an active post to play the middle and works best against teams not as capable of burying outside shots. It creates havoc on the perimeter but leaves the weak side not as well guarded.

Rory Hamilton, who has contributed several pieces to *Basketball Coach Weekly*, says he plays a lot of 1-3-1 zone.

He's provided the drills on the next couple pages, which he uses to help teach this defensive style.

For coaches considering the 1-3-1, think about your personnel. Do you have perimeter players who are capable of defending on top (or "big on") the ball? Are those same defenders able to cover two backside players when the ball is on the opposite side of the floor?

One area to watch when first installing the 1-3-1 is the low post. Teams tend to send two people low to gain a numbers advantage against your single defender. Then, if the offense screens the low defender, the advantage increases. You must teach those low defenders to go to the low side of the screens to force the offense into the middle of the defense where you have more support.

A lot of the success of a 1-3-1 comes down to your players understanding their movement is predicated upon where the ball is on the floor rather than where the offensive players are standing.

It takes some adjustment but with the proper personnel and athletic defenders, the 1-3-1 is a reliable option for teams struggling to guard taller squads.

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# ‘Anticipation’ Drills Fuel Defense

The 1-3-1 zone relies upon a lot of defensive movement and understanding where teams plan to attack it — teach anticipation so players get the reps they need to play without thinking

## WHY USE IT

You want your 1-3-1 zone working seamlessly without constantly needing to tell players where to be. Run these drills focusing upon defensive players' anticipation.

## SET UP

Each of the three diagrams represents the Anticipation Drill for a certain member of the defense. Diagram 1 focuses upon the Keeper (top defender). Diagram 2 works with the Pusher (wing defender away from the ball). Diagram 3 focuses on the Clogger (middle defender).

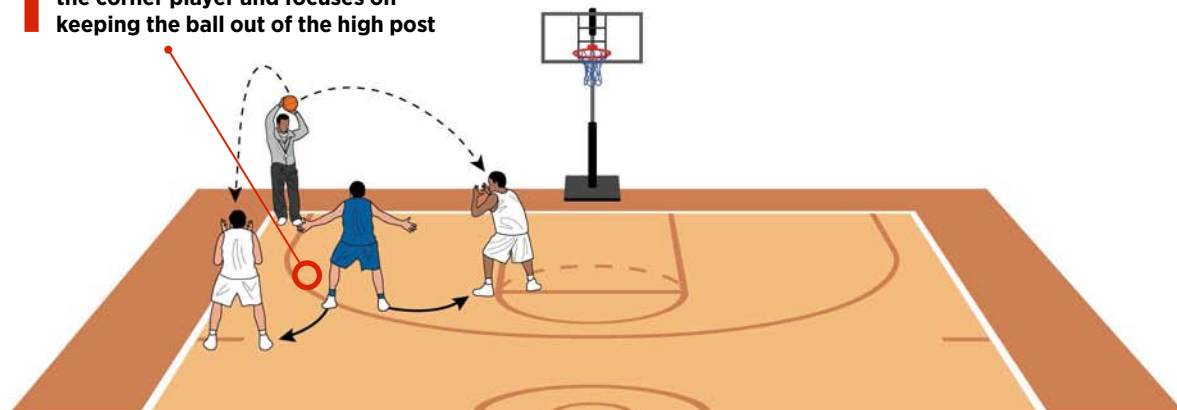
## HOW TO PLAY

In Diagram 1, place a coach in the corner with a ball. Stick a pass receiver at the wing and another at the elbow. The Keeper defender stands between them. The Keeper is responsible for keeping the ball off the high post and reading the shoulders of the ball handler in the corner [1]. You have the same concepts in Diagram 2 on with the Pusher reading the shoulders of the ball handler and trying to get deflections on longer passes [2]. Now the offense is in a box with a coach at the top and in the corner. The Clogger tries to deflect as many passes as possible in a 20- to 30-second interval [3].

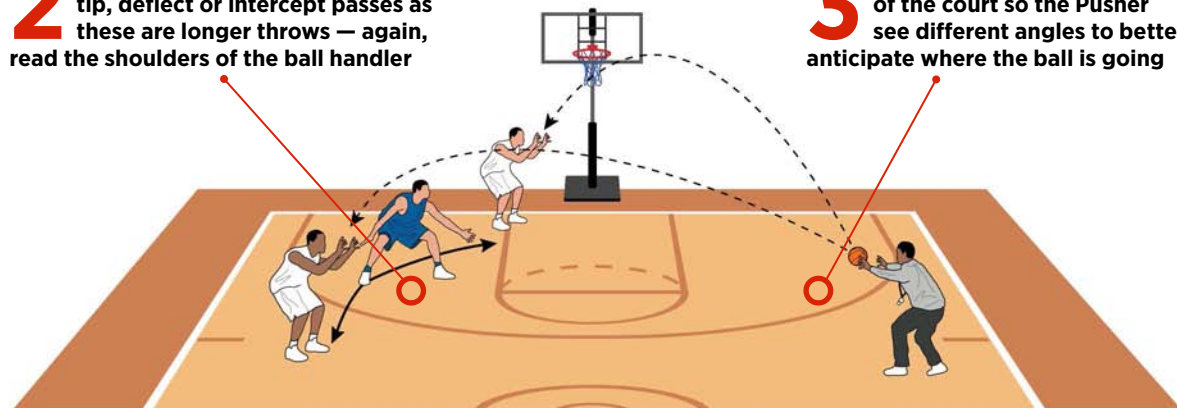
## TECHNIQUE

There is a part two to Diagram 3. This time have the ball passed to the corner. Now, the Clogger shifts down between the elbow and the post. The Clogger reads the shoulders of the corner player and tries to block passes to the block and elbow.

**1** The Keeper reads the shoulders of the corner player and focuses on keeping the ball out of the high post

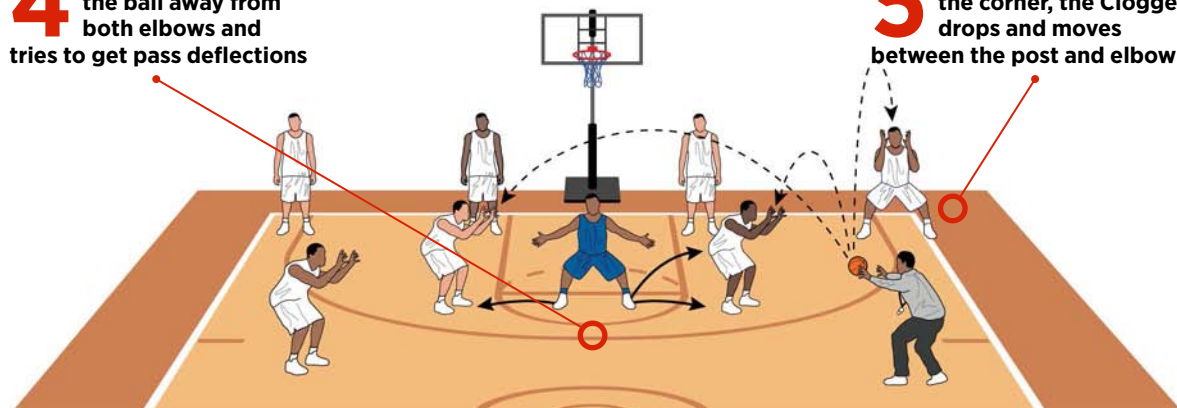


**2** The Pusher has an opportunity to tip, deflect or intercept passes as these are longer throws — again, read the shoulders of the ball handler



**3** Do this drill from both sides of the court so the Pusher see different angles to better anticipate where the ball is going

**4** The Clogger keeps the ball away from both elbows and tries to get pass deflections



**5** When the ball reaches the corner, the Clogger drops and moves between the post and elbow

Player movement → Ball movement - - - → Dribble ~~~~~ → Shot →

# 'Piston' Drill Perfects 1-3-1

The most important drill in teaching the 1-3-1, this exercises shows players how they work together in stopping the offense while also enforcing the need for communication

## WHY USE IT

Defenders must work in unison when playing the 1-3-1. This drill shows how when one person moves in a certain direction, the opposite-side defender must go the other way to maintain defensive balance and cover all areas of the floor.

## SET UP

Two coaches are on opposite wings out toward the mid-court area. Offensive players are at opposite blocks and opposite corners. "Pushers" are wing defenders on each side of the floor. The "keeper" is at the top and between the two coaches.

## HOW TO PLAY

One coach starts with the ball. The wing defender closest to the ball handler is "big on" the ball (defending close with hands up) as the keeper (4) backs off and plays the passing lane between the two coaches. The weak-side pusher (3) splits the difference from the block player and the coach on that side of the floor [1]. On the pass from coach to coach, the weak-side pusher makes a defensive V-cut and plays the passing lane first, and tries to deflect the pass from the coach to the corner. The coach also has the option to throw the diagonal pass, as 2 sprints to deflect it [2]. The drill continues in similar fashion as coaches throw guard-to-guard passes and pusher defenders V-cut and approach the ball as the weak-side pushers sprint low to deflect the pass to the block [3].

## TECHNIQUE

Communication is critical as defenders shout out who is "big on" and "wide off" the ball on each pass.

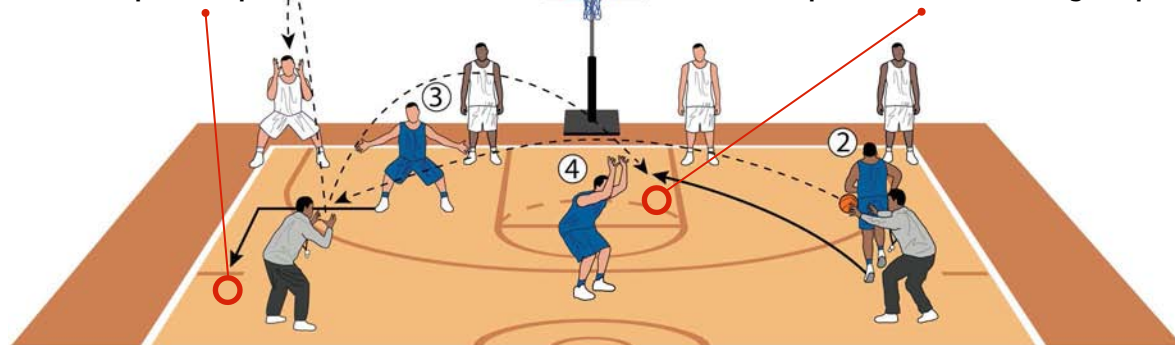
**1** With the ball on the opposite side, the weak-side pusher is positioned between the coach and block player on that side of the floor

**2** The pusher on the ball creates chaos with high hands and plays "big on" the ball

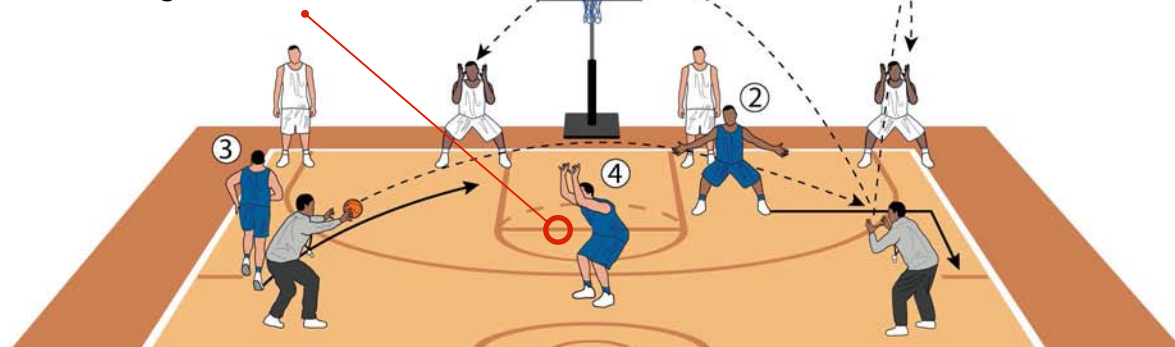


**3** On the pass from guard to guard at the top, the new ball-side pusher make a defensive V-cut and tries to deflect a potential pass to the corner

**4** When the ball is on the opposite side, the previous on-ball defender now must sprint low in case of a diagonal pass



**5** The drill continues with the ball shifting from side to side (and possibly the corner) with defenders communicating who is on the ball



Player movement →

Ball movement - - - →

Dribble ~~~~~ →

Shot →

Transferring should be a hard, critical decision for players, parents and coaches rather than today's world in which young players are shifting programs often

# Encourage Loyalty Over Transferring

It should take extraordinary circumstances for players to switch between programs — today's players aren't weighing the repercussions of the decision

**T**ransferring continues to receive more press today as players constantly seem to be switching from one program to another ... and it's happening at an earlier age.

As we transition from AAU to high school season right now, I have heard many coaches discussing how their players are leaving one travel or high school program to go to another for maximum exposure.

Regardless of the reasons, transferring is a huge stress for parents, coaches (AAU and high school) and the student-athletes involved.

When I worked in western Pennsylvania, transferring was prevalent. I always thought it seemed odd for student-athletes and parents to switch schools because of a perceived lack of playing time, philosophical differences with the coaching staff or wanting to build their version of the "Big 3" with other local talent.

As a college coach, I lean toward the side of the argument that student-athletes must persevere and remain loyal to their school, teammates and coaches unless family or health concerns prompt the

move to another program.

I talked to a few colleagues to get their thoughts on the topic to provide more perspective to high school coaches and players from the people leading the programs for which they eventually want to play.

"Finding the right fit is an important part of maximizing the AAU experience for any player and changing teams can help achieve that," says Mark Katariski, head women's coach at Seton Hill University (Greensburg, Pa.). "Staying in a consistent environment, however, can help give players an opportunity for potentially more steady, long-term development."

Dave Saur, assistant women's coach at UMass-Lowell, says transferring simply to be with friends shouldn't be an option, but players must be in a program where they will be seen.

"The stakes are getting higher in the world of AAU basketball ... you must play in events certified by the NCAA for college coaches to attend, and just as important, you must get playing time! If you are receiving both, you really have no reason to make a switch."

Jeff Osterman, associate head women's

coach at the University of South Florida (Tampa, Fla.) sees a link between all the transferring at the lower levels and what's happening within the college game.

"There is a direct correlation between players switching club teams and the high transfer rate of student-athletes at the Division I level," Osterman says. "'Loyalty' and 'Commitment' are two of our program's most sacred core values. We stress them daily and we look for them in the recruiting process."

Maximum exposure, playing time and coaching are important factors in the ultimate recruiting of student-athletes. Parents and players must research the programs and coaches (sit in on a practice, talk to other team members, etc.) before attending to find out if a particular program plans to assist them in reaching their basketball goals.

If families do this, they should stick with one program and avoid the hassle of switching AAU/high school teams, which can put a question mark on their character during the recruiting process.

[Follow Bert DeSalvo on Twitter @CoachDeSalvo](#)

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