

Basketball Scouting Guidelines

The outline below is a guide to follow when scouting an upcoming opponent.

Procedures to Follow:

Prior to arriving at a game you choose to scout, the following guidelines are recommended:

- 1.** Gather general information about the team being scouted before the game (from local newspapers, internet sites, other coaches, etc...)
- 2.** Arrive early to the game.
- 3.** Be sure to grab a program and, if none is available, get the players' numbers from the scorers table prior to tip-off.
- 4.** Sit high enough on the bleachers to see the floor well. Mid court is better than on the baseline as well.
- 5.** If possible, sit alone or with persons you brought along...helping to avoid all distractions.
- 6.** Watch and observe the pre game warm up. You can gain many insights by doing this i.e., readiness to play, styles of play, etc...

I. Don't:

- A.** Become a fan - simply observe and analyze
- B.** Worry about the officiating of the game.
- C.** Take too many notes - especially early in the game.
- D.** Get distracted by others around you.
- E.** Leave the game before the final buzzer.

II. Do:

- A.** Concentrate completely. You should simply jot down the starters by number and position early in the game.
- B.** Observe the game for a few minutes. Don't worry about taking notes yet or pay too close attention to any one player or phase of the game. Patience is key.

C. Try to determine your opponent's game plan. Could that game plan be relevant to us?

D. Mark down the first substitute or two. Why did they make that change? Did that sub make them more or less effective?

III. Team Defense (Basic Defense):

A. What is their basic defense they employ?

B. Do they change their defenses? How do they defend out-of-bounds plays?

C. Are they aggressive or passive? When and where?

D. Do they press and trap? Can we expect it?

E. How well do they transition to defense?

IV. Sample Notes on Team Defense:

The following are points you may want to make after the game:

A. How is their Man-to-man at the arc? Do they pressure the ball? Do they play good help side?

B. If they played zone, when and what kind did they play? Did they trap? Was it tougher inside or outside?

C. Were they a good defensive rebounding team?

D. Did they press? How did they press and when did they press? (After made baskets, free throws, timeouts, etc...)

V. Individual Defense (Matching up):

A. Who was their starting five and where did they play defensively (esp. if zone)

B. Establish the following in your mind (no notes needed):

1. Can we get the ball inside against them?

2. Can we attack the middle?

3. How do they defend the post?

4. Do they influence the ball a certain direction? Is it real pressure?

5. Do they deny or overplay the passing lanes?
6. Do they 'sustain' in their defense or will they falter?
7. Do they have a defensive star? A stopper?

VI. Team Offense:

A. Do they fast break? When?

1. Is it controlled or wild and crazy?
 2. Do they cherry pick?
 3. Do they break only off of steals or on missed field goals as well?
 4. How can we prevent their fast break?
- a.** Do we need disciplined shooting - high percentage shots?
- b.** Do we jam the outlets?
- c.** Are there special areas we should defend in transition?

B. The half court game?

1. In our man-to-man defense -- What can we do to stop them? What needs to be taken away?
2. In our zone defense -- Do they have a good zone attack? Should we key on anyone? Who are their perimeter shooters?
3. Must our team be alerted to anything special on their out- of-bounds plays?

VII. Individual Offense

A. Can they handle pressure? Do they have good ball handlers?

B. Are their guards one-side dominant?

C. Do they move well away from the ball?

D. Do their lane players work hard for position? Do they go after rebounds -- from inside or utilizing 'flyers'?

E. What is their individual strength?

VIII. Miscellaneous Notes to Take:

- A.** Do they have an unusual jump ball alignment?
- B.** Any unusual OOB situations?
- C.** Do they have a delay game set? When?
- D.** Anything special about their substitution pattern?
- E.** When you should do the majority of your note taking and what to write:
 - 1.** Time-outs and halftime
 - 2.** Write in your first thought on your match ups.
 - 3.** Their style of play.
 - 4.** Their team defense.
 - 5.** Their team offense.
 - 6.** Their individual offense.

IX. After the Game:

- A.** Review game and notes. Prepare a brief, concise, to-the-point report for your head coach or team. This report could also be broken up in the following manner:
 - 1.** Starting line-up, with position, size, grade, etc...
 - 2.** Individual analysis (be brief but evaluate player preferences)
 - 3.** Comment on team's style of play.
 - 4.** Team defense(s).
 - 5.** Team offense(s).
 - 6.** Miscellaneous information -- out-of-bounds plays, etc.
 - 7.** Personal recommendations.

X. Preparing Your Team for an Opponent:

At a pre-practice meeting:

- A.** Type a one- or two-page report for each player, if possible.
- B.** Read the report with the team before working on game plan on the court, or 'key' points at end of practice.
- C.** Don't overrate opposing individuals or the team. Don't make your players fearful of an opponent, regardless of their skills.
- D.** It is essentially important that you emphasize keys to winning. Be certain you know what has to be done to win. Be honest.
- E.** Ignore trivia (such as player's favorite moves--personal preferences are important though, i.e., does a player only go left, do they pull up or drive all the way, etc...)
- F.** Pump confidence into your team during the scouting report. Assign match-ups.
- G.** Ask players if they have any 'pointed' questions before keying on the floor. Don't take more than 12 to 15 minutes with the report.

XI. On-the-floor Keying:

- A.** Have an assistant coach take the reserves or scout team to the opposite end of the floor to go half-speed through the opponents' half court man-to-man offense.
- B.** Spend no more than five minutes on readying your reserves in the above manner.
- C.** Key your top 6 to 7 people against the reserves (opponents). Play man-to-man against their offense. Walk it first. Take away what they want to do! Make points of emphasis immediately, such as taking away certain passing lanes, putting pressure on their guards, stressing blocking out, and son on.
- D.** Key their zone offense against your zone defense, if you play it. Know your individual opponents (reserves) now! Who do you shade off of? Who do close out on very closely?
- E.** Key their out-of-bounds plays.
- F.** Key stopping their transition game, if necessary.

XII. Offense versus Opponent:

Use your regular practice to prepare. Run your regular practice with emphasis on points of attack (toward their center, transition to offense, and so on). Work against your opponent's basic defense as part of your regular practice. Let your reserves emulate the opponents general game strategy. If your opponent presses a great deal, have your reserves press all day in practice without necessarily telling the team this is what to

expect from opponent "X". NOTE: You do not necessarily need to stress this however. Be aware that your opponent may make subtle or obvious changes in preparing for you!

XIII. Game Night:

Place or use the whiteboard in the locker room to illustrate your game plan, including the following:

- A. Match-ups
- B. Your defensive game plan.
- C. Your offensive game plan.
- D. Miscellaneous information.
- E. "Keys" to winning tonight -- review your basketball philosophy.

