Basic Basketball Screens (Picks)

If you've ever watched the game of basketball, the great basketball teams set very good screens (picks). Screens (picks) will open up your offense in many ways. It doesn't matter if you primarily use a ball screen offense or an open post offense.

For example, when an offensive player sets a good screen (pick) the offensive player receiving the screen will have a good opportunity to score and pass to someone who is open. Once the defense adjusts, the screener often becomes wide open for shots. If you're setting good screens, it'll open your game as well. Most of all, it benefits the TEAM.

In this article, we will cover what a screen is, how to set a screen, how to run off a screen, and how to use basic screens.

Here's the definition of a screen:

When an offensive player legally blocks the path of a defender to open up another offensive player for a shot or to receive a pass.

Fundamentals of the Screener (Person setting the screen):

- Feet should be a little wider than shoulder-width apart. It's very important to have a wide, strong base.
- Hands should be crossed across your chest (girls) or protecting your groin area (boys)
- The screener needs to be stationary as the screen is set. Otherwise, the screener will be called for an offensive foul.
- Body should be vertical (should not be leaning forward or backwards).
- Square to the defender. The middle of the screener's chest should be in line with the defender's shoulder and hips.
- After the offensive player has ran off the screen, it is very important to open up to the basketball. Normally, you will pivot 180 degrees to the basketball. Sometimes, a cut to the basket or away from the basket may be open. Many times, the screener is the person who is open.

Fundamentals of the Person Receiving the Screen

- Set up the defender - It's very important for the offensive player to set up the screen. First of all, (s)he needs to wait until the screener is completely set. If (s)he leaves too early while the screener is moving, the screener will get called for an offensive foul.
Second, it's very good to set up the screen by faking the opposite direction even if it's only a slight head fake. This will get the defender leaning in the wrong direction and when he explodes the other direction to catch up with you, he'll run hard into the screen.

- **Shoulder to Shoulder** - When running off the screen, you will need to run shoulder to shoulder. This will not give the defender any room to get around the screen. It will force him to either trail behind you or plow through the screener for a defensive foul.

- **EXPLODE!** It's very important for the offensive player to blast off of the screen. This will leave the defender in the dust and give you much more time to set up for a shot.

Next, we cover some basic screens:

- Down Screen
- Ball Screen
- Back Screen
- Away Screen

**Basic Screens**

**Down Screen** - A player runs toward the baseline closest to their basketball goal to set a screen. In the next two diagrams, we have examples of down screens.

In this diagram, Player 1 starts from the three point line and runs to the block area to set a down screen for Player 2.

In this diagram, Player 1 starts from the high post area to set a down screen for Player 2.
**Ball Screen** - A ball screen is when an offensive player sets a screen for another offensive player who currently has the ball in possession. The only time you will want to set a ball screen is when the offensive player still has his or her dribble.

In this diagram, Player 1 is at the top of the key and Player 2 runs from the wing to set a ball screen on the defender guarding Player 1.

In this diagram, Player 2 is setting a ball screen on the defender guarding Player 1, except this time he is coming from the high post.
**Back Screen** - A back pick occurs when the screener sets a screen away from the ball on the defender's back. It may also be called a "Blind Screen" as well. Legally, the screener is supposed to give the defender one step, otherwise, the screener may be called for an offensive foul.

In this diagram, Player 2 comes from the block area to set a back screen for Player 1 near the three point line.

In this diagram, Player 2 comes from the block to set a back pick for Player 1 on the wing.
**Away Screen** - This is when a player sets a screen away from the ball. This happens when a player passes the ball to a player, then runs away from the ball to set a pick for another offensive player. This can also happen when a player is denied the ball, and he goes away from the ball to free up another offensive player.

In this diagram, Player 2 passes to Player 3 and runs away from the ball to set a screen for Player 1.

**Related Resources**

European Ball Screen Offense DVD

Open Post Offense DVD
Executing The Basketball Pick and Roll

How To Use And Set A Pick In Basketball

Basketball Pick and Roll Offense