

THE ATHLETE'S VISION

PREPARED BY COACH BROCK BOURGASE

As you take the court after a timeout, you glance at the hoop and visualize the ball move you will use to penetrate the key. You briefly size up the opponents as they break their huddle and assume their defensive positions. You know that if you do your job, you have the skills to get the best shot possible for the team. You recall executing these skills in practice and envisage how you'll get open, catch, sweep through, and go today.

As the referee hands your teammate the ball, you read the defense and look for openings on the court. You take your man away from the ball, make contact, and cut towards the open space. The inbounder is under pressure and you call for the ball to get his attention and present a target as you cut. You step towards the pass to cut off your defender and catch the ball with two hands.

After catching the pass, your first move is to sweep through and square up to the hoop. There is less than ten seconds on the clock but you have enough time to read the defense and start your move. You create space with your jab step and the defense backs off a half step. Your first step is your most explosive as you sweep through again, cross-step, and dribble before your pivot foot leaves the floor.

Staying low but keeping your head up, you pound the ball off the floor and attack the hoop. You are aware of your teammates' positions as they spot up and call for the ball. You beat your man and take it strong to the basket. You see the defense collapse on you and your teammates move as they find seams behind the defense. As the defense shifts, you see your teammate in the Russian spot and pass them the ball.

After the shot, you crash the boards and look for the offensive rebound. The ball bounces off the glass and swishes through the net. The opposing post catches the ball as it passes through the hoop and takes it out of bound. There are five seconds left on the clock so you find your check and deny the ball. After the inbound pass, you force the ball out of the middle and pressure a desperation shot as time expires.

Your teammates leave the bench and congratulate each other. You've pictured this scene in your mind and the exhilaration is greater than you expected. The pride you feel in your team and yourself will carry you through the upcoming practices until the next game, when you'll be in a position to succeed again.

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