

Amoeba Defence

Basic Amoeba Alignment

The following is the basic alignment for setting up the amoeba defence

This is the setup that your defenders need to be in when the offensive team is bringing the ball up-court. X1 is responsible for picking up the ball handler as soon as he or she crosses half court. X1's main job is to harass the ball handler, making it tough to dribble up the floor and pass to a teammate. X2 patrols the free-throw-line area looking for flash cuts to the high-post area. X3 and X4 are halfway between the free-throw line and the baseline, facing on an angle toward the sideline. X5 is the "hoop defender," the last line of defence guarding the basket. X5 stands as far back as needed to see the whole floor and must never get beat from behind.

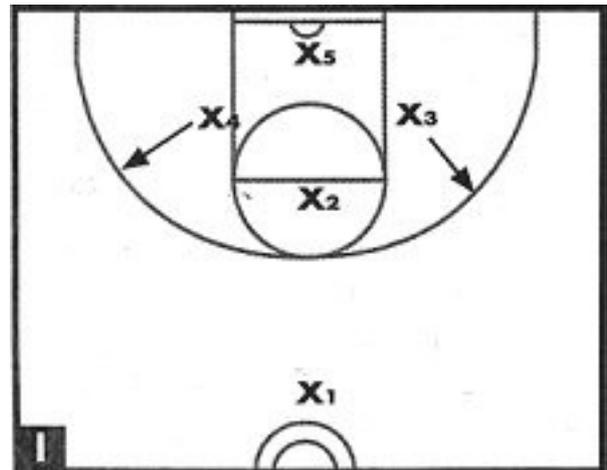
The tandem of X1 and X2 should be the quickest players on your team. X3 and X4 are halfway between the free-throw line and the baseline, facing on an angle toward the sideline. X5 is the "hoop defender," the last line of defence guarding the basket. X5 stands as far back as needed to see the whole floor and must never get beat from behind.

When the ball is passed from the point to the wing, X2 charges out to play the opponent with the ball.

X1 retreats to guard the free-throw area. When the ball handler initiates a dribble, X3 sprints out to double team with X2.

X5 moves over to the block area and X4 rotates to become the hoop defender.

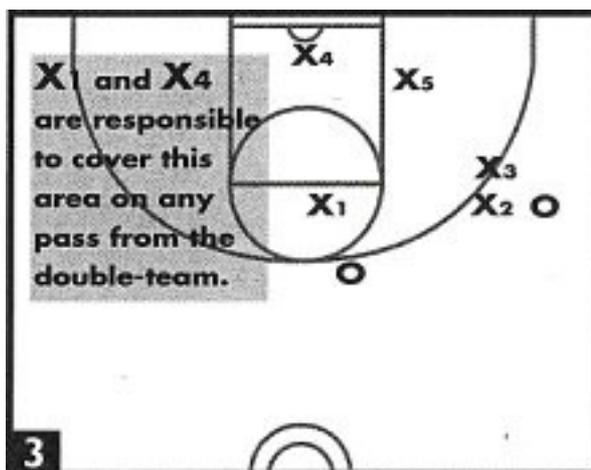
If the ball is passed back from the wing, X2 goes back to his or her original spot at the foul line and X1 pops out to the top, back to his or her original spot.



X1 and X4 are responsible for covering the shaded area on any pass from the double-team.

The ball is now double-teamed at the wing. X1 can either deny the point player or encourage a reverse pass from the double-team for a possible steal.

Tarkanian believed that if X2 and X3 are doing a good job of double-teaming, any pass cross court will be high enough in the air to be picked off by either X4 or X1, depending on where the pass is thrown.



Defending wing-to-corner passes.

When the ball is passed from the wing to the corner, X5 comes flying out and closes out on the corner player with the ball. When X3 sees that the ball is being passed from the wing to the corner, he or she pivots and sprints to the low-post area, in what Tarkanian called an "X-cut." X3 fronts the low-post offensive player. The gamble here is when the corner offensive player gets the ball and X5 is sprinting toward him or her, the player with the ball will see the low-post player open, not knowing that X3 is on the way to that area.

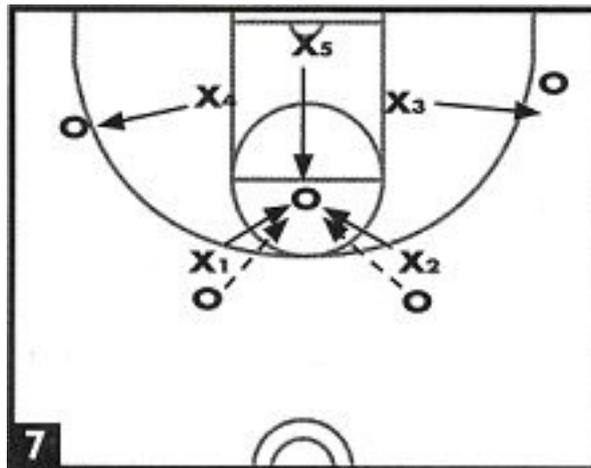


Many times, in a panic, the corner player instantly passes to the seemingly open post player and X3 comes up with a steal. Tarkanian's belief is that if X5 is closing out and tracing the ball, a good pass will be impossible to deliver and X3 will come up with a steal. X1 and X4 are still responsible for the weak side of the floor. X2 denies the reverse pass back to the wing from the corner. Any attempt to pass to the point will be picked off by X1.

Amoeba vs. Two-Guard Front

Some offenses try to beat the amoeba by utilizing a two-guard front.

If the offense plays a two-guard front, X1 and X2 match-up with the guards. If the offensive team puts a player at the high post, X5 comes up and guards behind. This encourages the offense to make a pass into the high post, which is what you want to happen.



If the ball is passed into the high post, X1 and X2 immediately double down and create a triple team at the high post. This may cause the high-post player with the ball to panic and either give up his dribble or throw an errant pass. X3 and X4 anticipate any passes into their areas and go for the easy steal.

Beating the Triple-Team

If the triple-team in the high-post area fails and the high-post player manages to get a pass to either the wing or the corner areas, your defenders react accordingly.

When the ball is passed to the wing from the post, X1 retreats to the high-post area and denies the post. X2 plays the wing player and X3 denies the pass to the corner or encourages a pass and gets a trap or steal in the corner. X2 may sprint down and double-team the corner player, depending on the game situation. X4 becomes the hoop defender and X5 guards the low post.



X1, who is playing the post, must anticipate passes to the point from the corner, the wing and cross court. This is one of the reasons why it is critical that X1 and X2 be your quickest players. X1 and X2 must always be alert and have the ability to anticipate defensively. If the ball is passed to the corner from the post or wing, X3 sprints out to play the corner player, X5 drops to the low-post area and X4 becomes the hoop defender.

X1 denies the post and X2 denies the pass back to the wing from the corner or encourages the pass and looks to make a steal. A pass from the corner to the point weak-side guard can be picked off by X1 and taken the other way for an easy layup.