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Team Strategies

Before beginning a game, team strategies should be set. You can access the strategy form by clicking the **Strategy** button on the main game screen. Below are some guidelines to follow for setting successful strategies. Remember, however, that there are many ways to handle a given situation. Part of the fun of coaching basketball is in coming up with creative and effective strategies.

Defensive Strategies

Boston Strategy

Defensive Strategy

Player Coverage

	Off	In	Out	Drv	3	In	Out	Three	2xIn	2xOut	2x3
PG Johnson,M	5	5	7	8	1	-----	-----	-----	----	----	----
G Scott	5	0	7	5	10	-----	-----	-----	----	----	----
F Worthy	5	7	4	1	0	-----	-----	-----	----	----	----
PF Rambis	2	5	1	0	0	-----	-----	-----	----	----	----
C Abdul-Jabbar	6	10	2	0	0	-----	-----	-----	----	----	----

Clear Defense Computer Defense Click grid to modify defense.

Defensive Matchups

Pos	Current	Defender	Pos
PG	Johnson,M	Johnson,D	PG
SG	Scott	Ainge	SG
SF	Worthy	Bird	SF
PF	Rambis	McHale	PF
C	Abdul-Jabbar	Parish	C

By Position

Global Coverage

Inside: [Dropdown]
Outside: [Dropdown]
Three: [Dropdown]

Global Double Teams

Inside: [Dropdown]
Outside: [Dropdown]
Three: [Dropdown]

Defense

Type: Man [Dropdown]
Help: Normal [Dropdown]
Pressure: None [Dropdown]

Aggressiveness

	Style
PG Johnson,D	Normal
SG Ainge	Normal
SF Bird	Normal

Offensive Strategy

Preferred Positioning

Offense	Inside%	Now
PG Johnson,J	0	Real
SG Ainge	0	Real
SF Bird	10	Real
PF McHale	80	Real
C Parish	90	Real

Global Offense: [Dropdown]

Offense Pace: Normal [Dropdown]

Inside Players: 1-2 Players [Dropdown]

Crash Boards: Normal [Dropdown]

Auto Sub When Tired
 Auto Sub When In Foul Trouble
 Use Rotation Grid

Special Strategy (less than two minutes)

Quick Foul Quick Shot
 Timeout After Score Last Shot
 Timeout After Opp Possession No Fouls

Boston Strategy

Ok

Individual Player Coverages

Coverages may be set for three court positions: inside, outside and three (beyond the arc). Below are a few tips for using each type of coverage. Formula adjustment charts and explanations of offensive ratings can be found in the appendix of the Action! PC Basketball manual. Some in-game examples of setting player coverages can be found in the "Gameplay Example" section.

Tight Coverage

Playing tight coverage will prevent the guarded player from getting open as often, and will lower the player's shooting percentage when he gets the ball. Playing tight also results in more turnovers

than normal coverage. On the other hand, tight coverage will lead to more fouls, and is easier to drive on. A defensive player in tight coverage is also less able to help his teammates, making other offensive players on the floor slightly more effective.

The game engine assumes that high rated players were guarded more tightly, on average, in real life. Playing tight outside coverage on Michael Jordan, for example, will not reduce his shooting percentage as much as it would with a more average player, as it is assumed that his stats were compiled while being played more tightly. *Not* playing tight in this case (normal coverage) will actually increase his shooting percentage. Likewise, the game engine recognizes that poorly rated players were played loose or off more often, and formulas are adjusted accordingly.

Loose Coverage

Loose coverage has essentially the opposite effect of tight coverage. Playing loose results in the guarded player getting open more often and having an increased shooting percentage. Fewer fouls will be committed when in loose coverage, and it is more difficult to drive on. Therefore, you should consider playing loose on players with high drive ratings and lower shooting ratings. Players with both high drive and shooting ratings are particularly dangerous, because they will drive more successfully against tight coverage, but will get open more often and shoot better against loose coverage. Defensive players in loose coverage are more effective in help defense, so you might consider playing loose against players who aren't a primary threat. Doing so frees up the defender to help against players who are. The game engine assumes that players with low ratings were, on average, played more loosely.

Playing Off

Playing off a player essentially concedes open shots, so it should obviously only be used against poor shooters. Formula adjustments are similar to loose coverage, but are larger. Driving against off coverage is particularly ineffective, so you might consider playing off of players who have very high drive ratings and are below average shooters, particularly if your team has weak inside defense (more susceptible to driving). Keep in mind, though, that you are likely turning those below average shooters into above average shooters, as they will be wide open. You can, and generally should, safely play off of players rated zero or one, as the game engine assumes that's the way they were guarded in real life. The more players playing off their man, the stronger the help defense.

Deny the Ball

Playing deny defense attempts to prevent an offensive player from receiving the ball at a particular court location. Players being denied will receive the ball about half as often as if they were being covered normally. If they do get the ball, they will be covered very tightly. This means that their shooting percentage will be lower and they will turn the ball over more, but they will also draw more fouls and be able to drive more successfully. Deny the ball against players you really want to shut down, but keep in mind that players who drive well will do so very well against a deny defense. Deny can be especially effective against nine or ten rated inside players, as they usually have low drive ratings. Defenders who are denying the ball from their man are not available for help defense.

Foul

Attempting to foul a player will usually result in a foul when that player gets the ball. There is also

a slightly higher chance of a turnover. In certain game situations, it might be a good idea to foul very good offensive players who are poor free throw shooters.

Double Teams

Double teams take effect when the player gets the ball. Shooting percentage in a double team is reduced by 100 to 200 points if only one double team request is in effect, or by 50 to 100 points if more than one is in effect. The danger in bringing a double team is that you will be leaving an offensive player open. Shooters who receive the ball out of a double team pass have their shooting percentage increased by 100 to 150 points. Players pass out of a double team based on their passing rating, so it is usually best to limit double teams to poor passers.

Global Coverages/Double Teams

Use this option to set a particular coverage for *every* player at a given court position. You might use this option late in the game, when you want to deny a three point shot, for example. You could also use global loose coverage as a starting point against a weak three point shooting team.

Defensive Matchups

By default, matchups are set by position. This can be changed in order to prevent a mismatch. Keep in mind that players are slightly less effective when playing defense out of position. Still, it is sometimes worth the penalty to get a better defender on a strong offensive player. Putting a good defensive point guard on a good offensive shooting guard may be a good idea if the normal position matchups result in a mismatch. Playing a center against a guard, or a guard on a center, is not likely to ever be a good idea.

Defense Type

Man

Standard man to man defense. All else being equal, man defense is the way to go. In leagues where zone is not allowed, man will be your only option.

2-1-2 Zone

Standard zone defense. Zones minimize the impact of poor defensive players, as well as the positive impact of good players. Playing a zone, then, can make it more difficult for your opponent to find mismatches to take advantage of. Zone defenses tend to allow slightly more open shots, so you may not want to play one against a good shooting team. A zone defense is also more difficult to drive on.

2-3 Zone

Inside zone. Reduces the shooting percentage of inside shots by 20-30%, and increases the percentage of outside shots by 40-60%.

3-2 Zone

Outside zone. Reduces the shooting percentage of outside shots by 20-30%, and increases the percentage of inside shots by 40-60%.

Defensive Help

There are five defensive help settings. These settings determine where defensive players look to help their teammates. Help settings can be useful against teams that are particularly strong inside and weak outside, or vice versa. Keep in mind, though, that a good coach may be able to take advantage of your help tendencies by setting up outside shots against inside help, or inside shots

against outside help. Certain game situations may call for temporary changes in defensive help. For example, if your opponent is behind and needs a three, it would make sense to play strong outside help. In most cases, help settings should stay at normal.

Normal - Standard defensive help

Inside - More defensive help on the inside

Outside - More defensive help on the outside

Strong Inside - Help defensively only inside

Strong Outside - Help defensively only outside

Defensive Pressure

Defensive pressure is used to help force turnovers. Putting the press on is often a good strategy late in games when trailing. You may also want to press more often against weak offensive teams, or if your team has players with high force turnover ratings. It can help to keep an eye on the team ratings for situations to turn on the press for a few possessions. Low offense and passing ratings for your opponent, and a high force turnover (labeled "Defense-To") rating for your team might indicate a good time to do so. Players will fatigue faster and will commit more fouls when pressing. As with most strategies, it is generally best to leave the pressure at normal. Pressing often is not likely to benefit you in the long run. Traps are zone presses, and are similar to zone defenses in that they minimize the negative impact of poor players, as well as the positive impact of good players.

Normal - Standard defensive pressure

Half Court Trap - Attempt to trap the opponent at half court. Increases turnovers and fouls by 20-30%. Increases shooting percentage by 20-30 points.

Half Court Press - Press the opponent at half court. Increases turnovers and fouls by 30-40%. Increases shooting percentage by 30-40 points.

Full Court Trap - Attempt to trap the opponent at full court. Increases turnovers and fouls by 50-60%. Increases shooting percentage by 50-60 points.

Full Court Press - Press the opponent at full court. Increases turnovers and fouls by 60-80%. Increases shooting percentage by 60-80 points.

Aggressiveness

The aggressiveness setting allows you to put your defensive players in either normal or safe mode. Safe mode is used when a player is in foul trouble. When in safe mode, the player will be less effective as a defender, but will commit fewer fouls.

Offensive Strategies

Preferred Positioning

By default, players are positioned according to where they played in real life. A typical center may be located inside about 90 percent of the time, for example. You can force a player into a particular court position using the preferred court position strategy. Doing so will make a player slightly less effective, as he is no longer able to move freely to any court position to get open. An example of where you might use this strategy is a late game situation in which you want to make sure that your best three point shooter will be positioned beyond the arc. In general, however, it is best to let players position themselves according to their real percentage.

Offense Pace

The offensive pace setting determines how much time your team will attempt to use to run a play or pass the ball. The actual amount of time used varies by factors such as league, era, teams, and game situation.

Last Shot - The last shot option is only available with less than 24 seconds on the game clock. Players will attempt to take a shot that leaves no time remaining on the clock for the opponent.

Quick Shot - Quick shot is only available in the final two minutes of a period. Players will take the first shot that is available, taking as little time off of the clock as possible.

Normal pace yields the highest shooting percentage and the fewest turnovers, so it is generally the best option. Fast pace may be useful when attempting to make a comeback. Slow pace could be used when protecting a lead, to give the opponent fewer opportunities to score and make a comeback. Slow pace might also be a good strategy when playing against a much stronger team.

Longer possessions mean fewer total possessions, and the stronger team has less of an advantage in what is essentially a shorter game. Note that a faster pace is assumed when little time remains on the shot clock or game clock. For example, if a play is called with five seconds remaining, the game assumes that you want to get a shot off in that time, even if pace is set to normal or slow. Results for that play are calculated as if pace was set to fast or very fast, as appropriate.

Inside Players

Use this setting to choose how many players you would like to typically be positioned inside. One to two players, the default setting, is usually ideal, but you may want to consider adjusting it for certain situations. If your team is very strong inside or your opponent is weak inside defensively, you may want to position more players inside. Likewise, if your team is weak inside and your opponent is strong, you may want fewer players positioned inside.

Crash Boards

The crash boards setting determines how aggressively your team attempts to pursue offensive rebounds. Setting crash boards to "strong" will lead to more offensive rebounds, but it will put more players out of position to defend against a fast break. Opponent fast breaks will as a result be more frequent and more successful. Setting crash boards to strong may be a good idea when trailing late, being severely out-rebounded, or when playing against a team without a strong fast break threat. Setting it to "light" may be a good idea when protecting a lead, significantly out-rebounding your opponent, or when playing a team that likes to run the fast break.

Special Strategies

Special strategies are available in the final two minutes of a period.

Quick Foul

Attempt to foul as soon as possible. Quick foul will also result in an occasional steal.

Timeout After Score

Call a timeout after scoring. This allows you to make subs, such as getting a better defensive lineup on the floor for your opponent's possession.

Timeout After Opponent Possession

Call a timeout immediately after your opponent's possession.

Quick Shot

See the above section on pace.

Last Shot

See the above section on pace.

No Fouls

Avoid committing a foul. This is useful when trying to avoid giving up a made shot plus a foul, such as when leading by three or four late in the game. Note that it is still possible to foul, especially if the player with the ball is being played tightly. Your defense is less effective when playing "no fouls", so it should be used wisely.

Play Calling

Offensive Play Calling

Understanding the Display

There are three basic ways to call an offensive play. You can select a play from the list of preset plays, select an option for the player with the ball (pass,drive, or shoot), or call a custom play.

The preset plays list may be set to display either defensive coverages or play percentages from the game preferences form (choose "Setup" from the game screen). The following information is displayed:

- A **basketball icon** to the left of a players name indicates that that player has the ball. You can call a play for this player by clicking the Pass, Drive, or Shoot buttons below. These buttons also display the player's rating (ex. "Shoot (6)" means the player is a six rated

The screenshot shows a game interface with a red header bar that reads "Joe Caldwell with the ball outside" and a timer showing ":21". Below the header is a table of player statistics:

	Location	Open	Rate	Defense
1 PG Hazzard	Outside	***	7/6	Goodrich(7)
2 G Caldwell	Outside	Ball	3/7	Van Arsdale(6)
3 F Hudson	Outside	*	8/4	Hawkins(5)
4 PF Bridges	Inside	*	5	Silas(3)
5 C Bellamy	Outside	*	1/0	Fox(3)

Below the table are two sections: "Custom Play Call" and "Options".

Custom Play Call buttons: Inside, Outside, Three, Hold Ball, Drive, Go To, Force 3.

Options:
 Quick Shot
 Last Shot
 Timeout After Score
Pace: Normal (dropdown menu)

At the bottom, there is a row of buttons: Pass, Drive (7), Shoot (3), Continue, Strategy, Box, Fastbreak, Free Throw, CPU, Setup, Timeout, PBP. A basketball icon is on the left.

shooter from his current position).

- **Location** displays the player's current court location, either Inside, Outside, or Three.
- **Open** displays how "open" a player is at his current position. How often a player is open is determined by his offense rating. If a player is called and does not get the ball, the player who does get the ball is based on how open the other players are. The following indicators are used:

*** = 90 percent chance of getting that player the ball.

** = 60 percent chance

* = 30 percent chance

- = less than 10 percent chance

- **Rate** displays the player's rating for his current court position. If the player is located either outside or beyond the arc, his drive rating is also displayed. For example, a player located outside with a rating of "5/8" means that the player is a five rated shooter from outside, and an eight for drives.
- **Play percentages** are displayed when the play percentage display is being used. The percentages indicate the chance of a given result happening if that player receives the ball. For example, a player with three stars and a 50% "good" rating (chance of a made shot), will have about a 45 percent chance of scoring on the play (90 percent chance of getting the ball times a 50 percent chance of making the shot). Percentages displayed are as follows:

Good - chance of a made shot

TO - chance of turning the ball over

Foul - chance of being fouled

- Playing with play percentages on is a good way to get to learn the game engine better, but playing with defensive coverages displayed tends to give a better representation of the information that is available to the coach and players in real life. **The defensive coverage display** shows the defender and his defense rating, or his inside defense rating if positioned inside. Also displayed is the type of coverage being used. For example, "Tight Carter(5)" means that the player is being defended tightly by Carter, who is a five rated defender.

Play Calling Tips

Here is a list of a few things to look for when calling plays from the preset plays list. The gameplay examples later in this guide provide some more specific examples of offensive play calling.

- How open are your top rated players? If your best players are open (two or three stars) it is very often best to simply get them the ball.
- Look for mismatches. Look for good offensive players who are being guarded by poor defenders, and try to feed those players the ball. If you see a matchup that you want to take advantage of, but the player is not open, try passing the ball for a new court setup where you may be able to take advantage of the mismatch. Occasionally, you will see a "Switch!" displayed along side the defensive player's name. This means that a player is defending out of position. You may be able to take advantage of this switch in defenders, especially if it involves someone severely out of position (ex. a center on a guard).
- Consider the type of coverage being played on each player. Remember that tight coverage leads to lower shooting percentages for the guarded player, but slightly higher percentages for other players on the floor. You may want to take advantage of tight coverage by driving on it, or loose coverage by setting up a shot. Very good players will often be guarded more tightly, at a smaller penalty than more average players, so it's not necessarily a good idea to

avoid getting the ball to a tightly guarded superstar.

- Consider your opponents *team* strengths and weaknesses. Do they have particularly strong inside defense? If so, you may want to choose more outside shots, and avoid driving except in more favorable situations. Looking at the team ratings on the right side of the game screen lets you see at a glance the strengths and weaknesses of the teams, based on players on the floor (ratings are on a 0-10 scale).
- Consider the game situation. If you are protecting a lead, pass the ball more and be more selective. If you are trailing late in the game, you may want to pass less often, be less selective, and play a faster pace.
- Try to pass the ball when double teamed. A successful pass out of a double team results in a higher shooting percentage for the player receiving the ball. Of course, if the player with the ball is a very poor passer and/or a very good scorer, you may be better off taking a shot.
- While there is a lot to consider when calling offensive plays, you'll find that the more you play the quicker the decisions will come. You'll begin to naturally see situations to take advantage of. Remember that these tips are only a few things to look for. Each coach and each team is different, so be creative and find your own winning solutions. On the other hand, being *too* creative and "over-coaching" your team will also lead to disappointing results. Very often, the best thing to do is to get your best players the ball and let them do the work.

Custom Play Calls

Another option for calling plays is the custom play call. Custom play calls are basically set plays run to a chosen player at a chosen court location. When a custom play is called, the defense gets a chance to adjust their defense before a result is determined. The following plays are available:

Inside - Call for an inside shot.

Outside - Call for an outside shot.

Three - Call for a three point shot.

Drive - Drive to the basket.

Go To - Allow the player to create a shot for himself or for a teammate. A good play for good passers and good offensive players.

Hold Ball - Hold the ball in an attempt to run out the clock. This is only available when the shot clock exceeds the game clock. If your opponent is fouling, try to get the ball to a good free throw shooter.

The screenshot shows the 'San Francisco select a play' screen. At the top, it says 'San Francisco select a play' and ':24'. Below that is a search bar containing 'San Francisco Outside'. A player selection table is shown with columns for PG Ron Williams (8), SG Jeff Mullins (8), SF Jerry Lucas (5), PF Clyde Lee (1), and C Nate Thurmond (4). A 'Computer Choose Player' button is at the bottom right of the table. Below the table are 'Custom Play Call' buttons: Inside, Outside (highlighted), Three, Drive, Go To, Force 3, and Hold Ball. To the right are 'Options' checkboxes for Quick Shot, Last Shot, and Timeout After Score, and a 'Pace' dropdown menu set to 'Normal'. At the bottom is a basketball icon and a row of action buttons: Pass (highlighted), Drive, Shoot, Continue, Strategy, Box, Fastbreak, Free Throw, CPU (highlighted), Setup, Timeout, and PBP.

Force Three - Use this when you need a three pointer. You will not get to choose who takes the shot, but it is most likely to go to a better three point shooter with a high offense rating.

Custom play calls are not always successful at getting the ball to the chosen player. Some factors that affect how often a play is successful are:

Offensive Rating - Higher rated offensive players are open more often. It is difficult to call a play for a player with a low offensive rating.

Offensive Positioning - Plays are more successful when they involve players in their typical court positions.

Defense - In general, the tighter the defense on a player, the more difficult it is to call a play for him. Playing "deny" defense can reduce the chance of calling a play to a player by up to 50 percent.

Usage - The game monitors usage throughout the season. Calling a specific player too often lowers the chance of getting the ball to him.

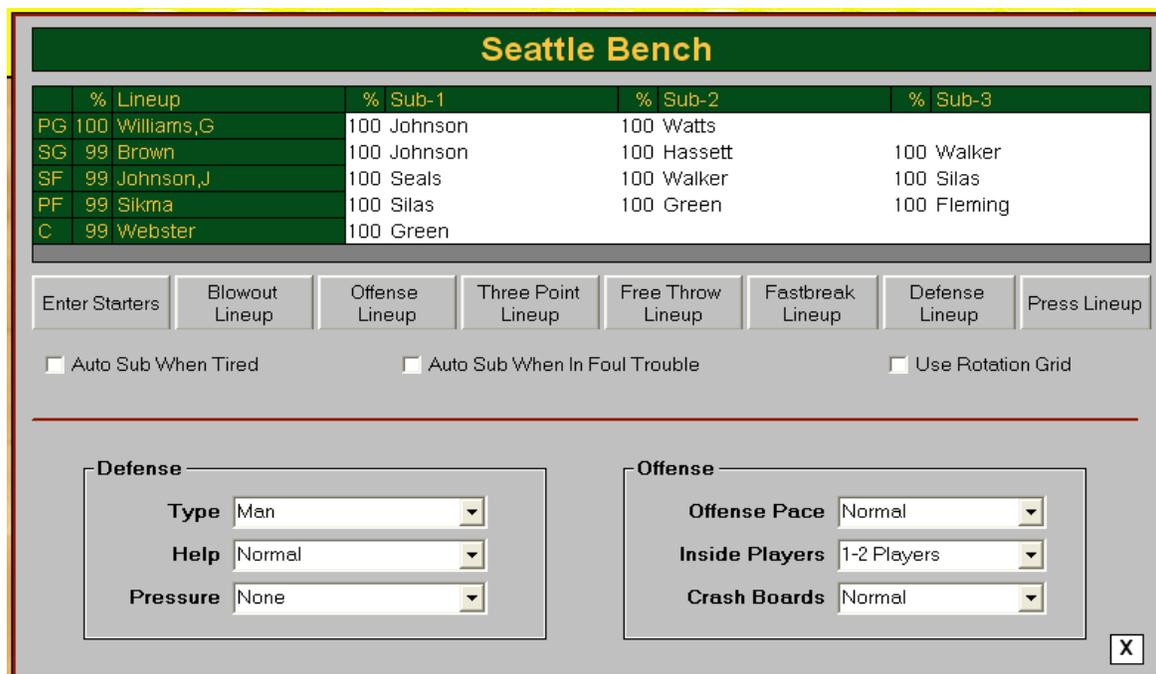
Because the defense is allowed to adjust once a play is called, and because they will pick up on plays or players that are called too often, it is best to use custom play calls wisely. Here are just a few situations where custom calls may be the way to go:

- Mismatches. Take advantage of mismatches. If you want to get the ball to a player who is being defended by a poor defensive player, but your player is not open in the preset play call box, you might try a custom call to that player.
- If no desirable play is available on the preset play call list, and sufficient time remains on the clock, try a custom play to one of your good offensive players.
- Use a custom play call to attack a defender who is in foul trouble.
- Late in the game, when you need a three, call for one. Either call a specific player, knowing that there's a chance that you won't get a three point shot, or choose the "force three" play.

Fast Breaks

You will occasionally be given the opportunity to attempt a fast break after a defensive rebound or a steal. If you choose not to attempt the fast break, you will be able to set up your offense as normal. Some things to consider when choosing whether to run a fast break include:

- How many players are involved for each side? If you have a greater number of players involved than your opponent (ex. 4 on 2, 2 on 1, etc) you might want to run the fastbreak. Also, the fewer *total* players involved, the more likely you are to be successful. For example, a two on one is more likely to succeed than a four on three fast break.
- What players are involved? Players' fastbreak ratings are displayed in parenthesis next to their name (ex. "Jordan (10)"). If you have high rated players involved in a fast break, you might want to take it even if you don't have a numbers advantage.
- What is the game situation? If you are protecting a lead, you should turn down more fast break opportunities. Passing the ball and running the offense will take more time off of the clock and give your opponent fewer opportunities to stage a comeback. On the other hand, you should accept more fast breaks if you are trying to come from behind.



Bench/Dead Ball Options

At each dead ball, a bench screen is displayed that allows you to make substitutions and adjust some basic strategies.

Substitutions

Making substitutions is as simple as clicking a player's name in the grid to enter him into the game at that position. The players that are displayed in the grid are those that are listed in the depth chart and are available for the game (not inactive or injured). You can adjust your depth chart from your team's roster form, accessed in-game by clicking on the team name on the scoreboard.

Each player's strength level is listed to the left of their name, and is displayed on a scale of zero to 100. Strength begins at 100, and decreases as play time is accumulated. When a player is taken out of the game, his strength increases. Penalties for fatigue begin at 80, at which point an asterisk appears alongside the strength number. For each point below 80, the player's effectiveness is reduced further. Tired players perform below their normal level in all areas, but the drop-off is especially significant in defense, rebounding, and fouls.

You can get an idea of how long a player will take to become fatigued by viewing the "play" and "rest" minutes on the status tab of your roster. Play minutes represent how long it takes for fatigue to set in, and rest minutes represent how long it takes for the player to regain full strength. When a player's minutes played for a game exceeds his average minutes per game, play minutes begin to decrease and rest minutes required increases. Players can usually play for slightly more than their real life average minutes per game, but consistently doing so leads to accumulated fatigue. A player who is averaging more minutes than in real life will begin to tire sooner. For this reason, it is a good idea to limit key players' playing time in blowout situations. This will allow them to play more in the games and situations that really count, and also eliminates their chance of injury.

Specialty Lineups

Specialty lineups make substitutions quicker in certain situations. You are able to set, for example, a lineup of you best defensive players that can be entered at any time by simply clicking one button. Specialty lineups are set from the team roster screen, by selecting the "Specialty Lineups" tab at the bottom of the form. The specialty lineups that may be set and entered into the game include:

Blowout Lineup - A lineup of bench players to use in blowout situations in order to keep star players from getting injured or fatigued.

Offense Lineup - Best offensive players by position.

Three Point Lineup - Best three point shooters by position.

Free Throw Lineup - Best free throw shooters by position.

Fastbreak Lineup - Players with the highest fast break ratings by position.

Defense Lineup - Best defensive players by position.

Press Lineup - Players with the highest "force turnover" rating by position.

Gameplay Example: 1982 Los Angeles @ Boston

The following is a gameplay example to illustrate some of the coaching techniques and strategies in a real situation. The year is 1982, and the teams are Los Angeles and Boston. Boston will be the human coached team. Remember that there are many ways to coach a basketball game, and no one way is *the* correct way.

Setting Strategies:

Player Coverages

Let's take a look at the first eight players on the Los Angeles roster:

PG Magic Johnson - Off 4, In 5, Out 7, Drive 7, Three 0, Pass 9

Johnson is a threat because of his higher than average outside and drive ratings, and especially his very high passing rating. I definitely want to play off him from beyond the arc, which will limit his effectiveness passing and driving from that position. I don't have a very good defensive matchup (PG Archibald is only a "1"), so I'm going to play tight on him outside for now, rather than let him get the ball often against a poor defender. If he seems to be driving too effectively, I might consider backing off a bit (playing normal). My backup point guard is a much better defensive player (a "7" who averaged 21.5 minutes per game), so this might be a good game for him to see more playing time. Bringing a double team would be a mistake, as he would pass out of it with ease.

SG Norm Nixon - Off 5, In 0, Out 4, Drive 6, Three 0, Pass 7

Another above average passer and driver. I'm going to play off him from three and inside, and normal from outside. Depending on how things go, I could play loose outside to further limit his effectiveness on the drive, and to allow for stronger help against Los Angeles' other threats. For now, though, I don't want to concede the outside shot against another poor defender at shooting guard.

SF Jamaal Wilkes - Off 6, In 3, Out 5, Drive 4, Three 0, Pass 2

I'm going to play off of Wilkes from three point land, and normal everywhere else. He's not of primary concern, and I have a good defender on him (Larry Bird, a "7").

PF Kurt Rambis - Off 3, In 7, Out 1, Drive 0, Three 0, Pass 2

If Rambis wants to shoot from outside or three, that's just fine with me, so he'll get played "off" from there. I'm going to play him normal from inside. He's a good inside scorer (7), but as only a three for offense rating, he won't get the ball that often anyway. Besides, I have a good defensive matchup at power forward (Kevin McHale is a "9" for inside defense).

C Kareem Abdul-Jabbar - Off 6, In 10, Out 4, Three 0, Pass 2

Kareem is the biggest threat in the Los Angeles lineup, mainly because of his inside rating. I'm going to start the game by denying the ball inside, and then bringing a double team any time he gets the ball. He's not a great passer (although 2 is not bad for a center), so he'll likely be shooting against the double team. There's certainly no guarantee the double team will shut him down (he was probably doubled a lot in real life, and he still averaged 21.8 points) but it should help. I'll be playing off from three, and normal from outside.

Bob McAdoo - Off 7, In 5, Out 5, Drive 0, Three 0, Pass 1

Because of his high offense rating, McAdoo will probably get the ball fairly often when he is in the game. I'm going to play off from three, tight outside and normal inside. Playing tight outside defense takes advantage of the fact that he is no threat to drive or pass.

James Worthy - Off 5, In 8, Out 3, Drive 0, Three 3, Pass 2

Worthy will be guarded tightly inside, and normal everywhere else. I certainly have the option of playing loose from outside and three, so I'll keep that in mind as the game progresses.

Steve Mix - Off 6, In 3, Out 1, Drive 3, Three 0, Pass 4

As a six rated offensive player, Mix may get some good shot opportunities if I play loose or off. He's a poor shooter, though, so that's exactly what I'll do. Off from three and outside, and loose inside.

Defensive Matchups

I'm going to leave my matchups as is right now. I know that I have poor defensive guards (although the backups are a bit better), but putting a forward at a guard spot defensively would be a mistake. Anyway, I know that the most important thing for me to stop is the inside offense, and I have good defenders there. Rather than swapping matchups, I'll likely use my good defensive players off the bench, especially if, for instance, Magic Johnson proves to be too much for Archibald to handle.

Defense Type, Help, and Pressure

In 1982, zone was not allowed, so the only defense I can play is man. If it were allowed, this may actually be a situation to consider playing the occasional zone defense. I have two poor defenders whose negative impact I could minimize while they are in the game. An inside zone, like the 2-3, could also help in shutting down Kareem inside, and Magic on the drive. I can't

though, so the decision is easy.

Inside help might be useful at some point in this game, because Los Angeles has quite a strong inside game. They're not that bad outside though, and my team defense is stronger inside than out, so I don't really want to concede too much from outside and three just yet. I'll be paying attention to where the scoring is coming from as the game progresses, but for now help defense will stay at normal.

My team doesn't have a very high force turnover rating (it's only a "2" with starters in the game) so I'm not going to be pressing unless I need to. If I do, I have a few players on the bench with high force turnover ratings who I'll use. They are in my "press" specialty lineup for quick access.

Aggressiveness

Aggressiveness should probably always be set to normal at the beginning of the game. I'll consider putting players on safe mode if they get into foul trouble, but I still want them in the game.

Offensive Positioning

Forcing players into specific court positions reduces their effectiveness, so I won't do it except in specific situations where I need someone to be somewhere. Beyond the arc when I need a three, for example.

Offense Pace

No need to change the pace from normal. If I get a big lead, or fall behind, I might make adjustments. For now, I want to use the pace that has my offense at its most effective, not rushing things or passing by good opportunities.

Inside Players

I really don't need more or fewer than the normal amount of inside players here. My offense is balanced, and my opponent doesn't have any glaring defensive weaknesses for me to take advantage of.

Crash Boards

Team rating analysis shows that I should have a slight edge in rebounding. It's not enough for me to want to crash boards more lightly, and since Los Angeles isn't a particularly strong fast break team, there wouldn't be much to gain anyway. I'll leave it at normal and take my rebounding advantage. Any adjustments I'll make to the crash boards setting will be short term and will be a result of game situations (leading/trailing).

With strategies set, we're ready for the tip.

Gameplay

Los Angeles won the jump ball, and Abdul-Jabbar missed a jump shot from the corner. The ball bounced out of bounds, so it's my ball and I have an opportunity to call a play:

Boston select a play :24

	Location	Open	Rate	Defense
1 PG Archibald	Outside	*	5/7	Johnson,M(6)
2 G Ainge	Outside	-	5/4	Nixon(3)
3 F Bird	Outside	-	8/6	Wilkes(2)
4 PF McHale	Inside	-	8	Rambis(6)
5 C Parish	Outside	***	2/0	Abdul-Jabbar(5)

Custom Play Call

Inside	Outside	Three	Hold Ball
Drive	Go To	Force 3	

Options

<input type="checkbox"/> Quick Shot	Pace Normal ▼
<input type="checkbox"/> Last Shot	
<input type="checkbox"/> Timeout After Score	

Pass	Drive	Shoot	Continue	Strategy	Box
Fastbreak	Free Throw	CPU	Setup	Timeout	PBP

Not much available here, so I'll pass the ball. I do see that Larry Bird is being defended by Wilkes, a "2". That might be something to look for throughout the game.

Larry Bird with the ball outside :15

	Location	Open	Rate	Defense
1 PG Archibald	Outside	-	5/7	Johnson,M(6)
2 G Ainge	Outside	-	5/4	Nixon(3)
3 F Bird	Outside	Ball	8/6	Wilkes(2)
4 PF McHale	Inside	*	8	Rambis(6)
5 C Parish	Inside	**	9	Tight Abdul-Jabbar(5)

Custom Play Call

Inside	Outside	Three	Hold Ball
Drive	Go To	Force 3	

Options

<input type="checkbox"/> Quick Shot	Pace Normal ▼
<input type="checkbox"/> Last Shot	
<input type="checkbox"/> Timeout After Score	

Pass	Drive (6)	Shoot (8)	Continue	Strategy	Box
Fastbreak	Free Throw	CPU	Setup	Timeout	PBP

Easy call here. After the pass, Bird has the ball outside. I'll shoot it. If Bird didn't have the ball and wasn't open, Parish inside would be a good call here, too. He's a "9", fairly open, and defended by a "5" defender.

Boston select a play :24

	Location	Open	Rate	Defense
1 PG Archibald	Outside	-	5/7	Johnson, M(6)
2 G Ainge	Outside	-	5/4	Nixon(3)
3 F Bird	Outside	***	8/6	Wilkes(2)
4 PF McHale	Inside	*	8	Rambis(6)
5 C Parish	Inside	**	9	Deny Abdul-Jabbar(5)

Custom Play Call

Inside	Outside	Three	Hold Ball
Drive	Go To	Force 3	

Options

<input type="checkbox"/> Quick Shot	Pace Normal
<input type="checkbox"/> Last Shot	
<input type="checkbox"/> Timeout After Score	

Pass

Drive

Shoot

Continue

Strategy

Box

Fastbreak

Free Throw

CPU

Setup

Timeout

PBP

Bird made the shot, and Los Angeles was unable to score on their next possession. I'm given another easy call. I'm not going to try to get too creative in these situations, just get it to Bird, who has about a 90 percent chance of getting the ball outside(***). In this instance, the ball actually ended up going to McHale inside, who scored to give me a 4-0 lead.

Boston select defense and click Ok

Wilkes has the ball inside.
Inside-3 Pass-2

Player Coverage

Off
Loose
Normal
Tight
Foul
Double Team

No Fouls

Defensive Help

Normal
Inside
Outside
Strong Inside
Strong Outside

Ok

Pass

Drive

Shoot

Continue

Strategy

Box

Fastbreak

Free Throw

CPU

Setup

Timeout

PBP

My opponent has called a custom play here, so I get the chance to make an adjustment to my defense. Wilkes isn't much of an inside scorer, so I'll just play him normal.

:24

Boston select a play

	Location	Open	Rate	Defense
1 PG Archibald	Outside	***	5/7	Johnson,M(6)
2 G Ainge	Outside	*	5/4	Nixon(3)
3 F Bird	Outside	**	8/6	Switch! Abdul-Jabbar(5)
4 PF McHale	Inside	*	8	Rambis(6)
5 C Parish	Inside	*	9	Switch! Wilkes(2)

Custom Play Call

Inside	Outside	Three	Hold Ball
Drive	Go To	Force 3	

Options

Quick Shot

Last Shot

Timeout After Score

Pace
Normal

Pass

Drive

Shoot

Continue

Strategy

Box

Fastbreak

Free Throw

CPU

Setup

Timeout

PBP

Here's a situation where a switch has occurred. Abdul-Jabbar is now defending Bird, and Wilkes is matched up on Parish, both good out of position mismatches. Parish is where I'd like to go, but Bird is a good choice too, and he's more open. I can either try a pass and hope that Parish gets open, or get it to Bird with the full shot clock. I could go either way, but I'm going to try a pass this time.

My attempt to cycle the ball resulted in a shot being taken, and missed. A good call doesn't guarantee a good result. After an offensive rebound and a pass, I am left with this:

:24

Boston select a play

	Location	Open	Rate	Defense
1 PG Archibald	Outside	-	5/7	Johnson,M(6)
2 G Ainge	Outside	*	5/4	Nixon(3)
3 F Bird	Outside	*	8/6	Wilkes(2)
4 PF McHale	Inside	*	8	Rambis(6)
5 C Parish	Inside	***	9	Deny Abdul-Jabbar(5)

Custom Play Call

Inside	Outside	Three	Hold Ball
Drive	Go To	Force 3	

Options

Quick Shot

Last Shot

Timeout After Score

Pace
Normal

Pass

Drive

Shoot

Continue

Strategy

Box

Fastbreak

Free Throw

CPU

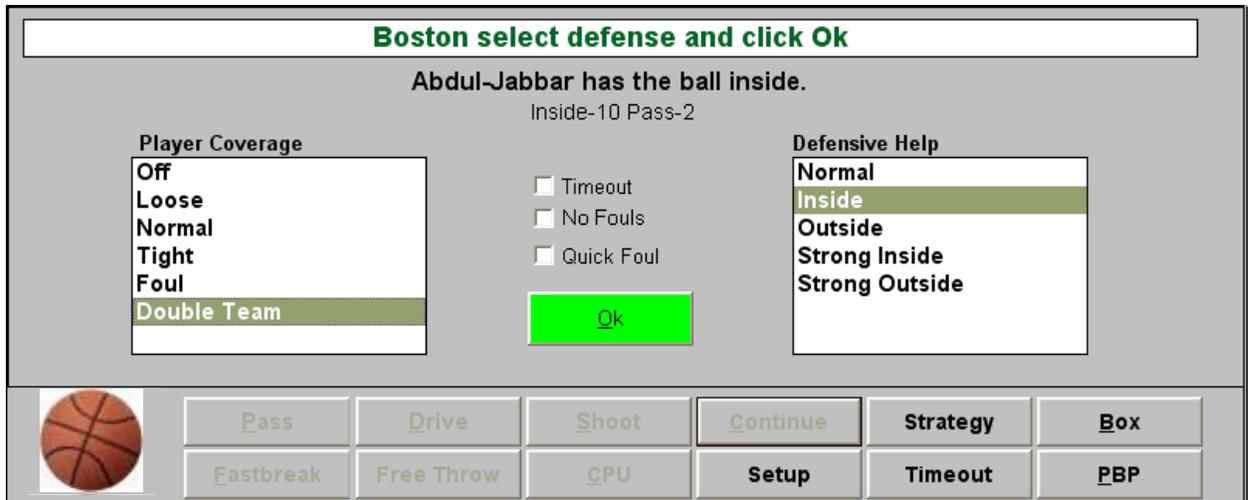
Setup

Timeout

PBP

Parish is open inside here, so I'll attempt to send the ball his way. He's being denied by Abdul-Jabbar, but I still think it's a good idea, since he's a very good inside scorer. Another option would be to pass and see what becomes available, possibly the Bird/Wilkes mismatch.

Parish got the ball, but committed an offensive foul. I have an opportunity now to make subs and strategic adjustments. All of my players are still in the mid nineties for strength after only a few minutes of play, so they will stay in the game. It's too early to be making strategy adjustments, so I'll just continue.



Another custom call by the computer coach. Abdul-Jabbar has the ball inside, so I'm bringing a double team and inside help. In this case, my call worked, and I got the steal. I know better than to expect I'll be able to consistently shut him down, though. A few plays later, a defensive rebound presents this fast break opportunity:



This is a pretty easy decision. A two-on-two fast break can be effective if the right players are involved. With Ainge (a "4" for fast breaks) and McHale(0), I'm better off passing and setting up the offense. After the pass, I had nothing available, so I passed again, and got this court setup:

Nate Archibald with the ball outside :14

	Location	Open	Rate	Defense
1 PG Archibald	Outside	Ball	5/7	Johnson, M(6)
2 G Ainge	Outside	-	5/4	Nixon(3)
3 F Bird	Outside	*	8/6	Wilkes(2)
4 PF McHale	Inside	*	8	Rambis(6)
5 C Parish	Inside	*	9	Deny Abdul-Jabbar(5)

Custom Play Call

Inside	Outside	Three	Hold Ball
Drive	Go To	Force 3	

Options

<input type="checkbox"/> Quick Shot	Pace Normal
<input type="checkbox"/> Last Shot	
<input type="checkbox"/> Timeout After Score	

Pass	Drive (7)	Shoot (5)	Continue	Strategy	Box
Fastbreak	Free Throw	CPU	Setup	Timeout	PBP

Nate Archibald has the ball outside. He has a good drive rating, so I will attempt to drive. Otherwise, this might be a good situation for a custom play call. Nobody else is very open, and another pass would run down the shot clock to just a few seconds. My custom call would probably be outside to Bird, again to take advantage of my star player being in a mismatch situation. I don't want to call this play too often though, or my opponent will begin to adjust to stop it.

Clock Management

Los Angeles		Boston
114	4	119
Fouls: 4	1:03	Fouls: 3
Timeouts: 4	:23	Timeouts: 4

We have jumped ahead in this game, and it should be a good finish. Boston has a five point lead with a minute to go. I'll be coaching both teams from this point in, to show clock management from both sides.

Los Angeles select a play :23

	Location	Open	Rate	Defense
1 PG Nixon	Outside	***	4/6	Buckner(7)
2 G Cooper, M	Outside	-	6/3	Henderson(6)
3 F Wilkes	Outside	-	5/4	Bird(7)
4 PF Rambis	Inside	-	7	McHale(7)
5 C Abdul-Jabbar	Inside	**	10	Robey(0)

Custom Play Call

Inside	Outside	Three	Hold Ball
Drive	Go To	Force 3	

Options

<input type="checkbox"/> Quick Shot	Pace Normal
<input type="checkbox"/> Last Shot	
<input type="checkbox"/> Timeout After Score	

Pass	Drive	Shoot	Continue	Strategy	Box
Fastbreak	Free Throw	CPU	Setup	Timeout	PBP

Los Angeles has the ball down by five. There's an obvious mismatch here, Abdul-Jabbar is guarded by Robey, a very poor defender. With about a 60 percent chance of getting him the ball, I'll take it. Only down by five I'm not going to go to a faster pace just yet, but I'm also not going to make unnecessary passes that would take time off the clock.

Boston select defense and click Ok

Abdul-Jabbar has the ball inside.
Inside-10 Pass-2

Player Coverage

- Off
- Loose
- Normal
- Tight
- Foul
- Double Team

No Fouls

Defensive Help

- Normal
- Inside
- Outside
- Strong Inside
- Strong Outside

Ok

Pass

Drive

Shoot

Continue

Strategy

Box

Fastbreak

Free Throw

CPU

Setup

Timeout

PBP

In the final two minutes of the game, the defense can make an adjustment to each offensive call. Abdul-Jabbar has the ball inside and a mismatch, so Boston will bring the double team and inside help.

The inside shot was missed, and Boston got the rebound and a four-on-four fast break opportunity. With no desire to play fast, and with tired players on the floor, Boston won't consider taking this one, and will call a timeout instead.

Boston select a play :24

	Location	Open	Rate	Defense
1 PG Archibald	Outside	-	5/7	Nixon(3)
2 G Bradley	Outside	*	1/5	Cooper,M(9)
3 F Bird	Three	*	7/6	Wilkes(2)
4 PF Tillis	Inside	***	3	Rambis(6)
5 C Parish	Inside	-	9	Deny Abdul-Jabbar(5)

Custom Play Call

Inside

Outside

Three

Hold Ball

Drive

Go To

Force 3

Options

Quick Shot
 Last Shot
 Timeout After Score

Pace

Normal

Pass

Drive

Shoot

Continue

Strategy

Box

Fastbreak

Free Throw

CPU

Setup

Timeout

PBP

After the timeout and some substitutions, Boston has switched to slow pace and has this setup. Not much is available, but Boston wants to take time off of the clock anyway, so they will pass

the ball. Los Angeles doesn't want to foul just yet, but this is a very important defensive stop to get.

Darren Tillis with the ball inside
:16

	Location	Open	Rate	Defense
1 PG Archibald	Outside	-	5/7	Nixon(3)
2 G Bradley	Outside	*	1/5	Cooper ,M(9)
3 F Bird	Outside	**	8/6	Wilkes(2)
4 PF Tillis	Inside	Ball	3	Switch! Abdul-Jabbar(5)
5 C Parish	Inside	*	9	Switch! Rambis(6)

Custom Play Call

Inside	Outside	Three	Hold Ball
Drive	Go To	Force 3	

Options

<input type="checkbox"/> Quick Shot	Pace Normal ▼
<input type="checkbox"/> Last Shot	
<input type="checkbox"/> Timeout After Score	

Pass	Drive (2)	Shoot (3)	Continue	Strategy	Box
Fastbreak	Free Throw	CPU	Setup	Timeout	PBP

With 16 seconds on the shot clock, Boston has a defensive switch to consider. In this case, the switch doesn't really help, as nobody is significantly out of position (PF switched with C). Larry Bird is fairly open, so he'll get the call. The slow pace should use up just about the rest of the shot clock.

Bird made the shot and was fouled, and made the free throw. Los Angeles, down by eight with 41 seconds remaining, is beginning to get desperate. Several strategy adjustments are advisable in this situation. Offensive pace is set to fast or very fast, to score quickly. They can't afford too many missed shots, but if shots are missed offensive rebounds are a must, so crash boards is set to strong. Quick foul is turned on, so that a foul will be committed as soon as Boston gets the ball. Finally, the full court press is on to force as many turnovers as possible. Boston brings in the defense specialty lineup, minus McHale who is tired.

Los Angeles select a play
:24

	Location	Open	Rate	Defense
1 PG Nixon	Outside	***	4/6	Buckner(7)
2 G Cooper ,M	Outside	**	6/3	Bradley(7)
3 F Wilkes	Outside	*	5/4	Bird(7)
4 PF Rambis	Inside	-	7	Tillis(5)
5 C Abdul-Jabbar	Inside	*	10	Parish(6)

Custom Play Call

Inside	Outside	Three	Hold Ball
Drive	Go To	Force 3	

Options

<input type="checkbox"/> Quick Shot	Pace Fast ▼
<input type="checkbox"/> Last Shot	
<input type="checkbox"/> Timeout After Score	

Pass	Drive	Shoot	Continue	Strategy	Box
Fastbreak	Free Throw	CPU	Setup	Timeout	PBP

Not much is available here, but Los Angeles must do something. Abdul-Jabbar inside is the call, even though he is not very open. If he gets it, he will have the best chance of scoring. All of the play calls in this situation are probably about equal.

The shot was missed, Boston got the rebound, and the quick foul setting took effect. Boston is now shooting free throws, up by eight, with only 27 seconds remaining.

Both free throws were made, and the game is slipping out of reach.

Los Angeles select a play
:24

	Location	Open	Rate	Defense
1 PG Cooper,M	Outside	-	6/3	Archibald(1)
2 G Nixon	Outside	-	4/6	Bradley(7)
3 F Worthy	Inside	*	8	Bird(7)
4 PF Rambis	Inside	***	7	Tillis(5)
5 C Abdul-Jabbar	Outside	*	4/0	Parish(6)

Custom Play Call

Inside	Outside	Three	Hold Ball
Drive	Go To	Force 3	

Options

Quick Shot

Last Shot

Timeout After Score

Pace
Very Fast

Pass	Drive	Shoot	Continue	Strategy	Box
Fastbreak	Free Throw	CPU	Setup	Timeout	PBP

With the pace now set to very fast, Los Angeles has brought on some better three point shooters. The best call here is probably to force a three.

The shot was missed, and Boston got the rebound. After a foul and two more made free throws the game was out of reach.