

rocket science

Houston Made the Most of Its Scouting Report by Joe Ash

It's a tall world could be the theme of the NBA, but it's a small whirl for an advance scout to try to keep up with the electrifying pace set by the best players in the hectic world of pro basketball.

The Houston Rockets incorporate the coordinated efforts of the advance scout, video coordinator, assistant coaches, and head coach Rudy Tomjanovich to prepare the players during the busy season. The

responsibility of an advance scout is to furnish a package of information to the coaches that will assist them in establishing the strategies for each opponent. This scouting report, along with video breakdowns, game-tape reviews, staff and team meetings, game-day walk-throughs, and pre-game meetings are all factors in preparing the game plan. It is a system the Rockets believe has contributed to their

NBA championships in 1994 and '95.

In the Rockets' system, the report will be compiled after the advance scout personally sees at least two recent games of the opponent and possibly has had the opportunity to review game tape on the opponent as well. Naturally, the more looks that he can get of the opponent, the better the "feel" he will have when reporting on them.

Breakdown of the Scouting Report/Five Major Parts of the Game to Report On

1. Individual Players

- Describe physical and athletic characteristics (emphasizing any special aspects).
- Comment on level of skills for position. Include both strengths and weaknesses.
- Describe the player's role with team and effectiveness in carrying out that role. What are the things that this player does within this system that we must be aware of.
- Any special thoughts, tendencies, or factors.
- How to play this player. List three or more objectives that we must work at. These are based on an evaluation

of all the information we have on this player, which in turn will determine what we must do to be successful. These may be very basic objectives such as:

"Locate and make contact on all shots. Box out. Do not allow penetration—keep out of the lane! Pick up down court and pressure all ball-handling. Must pick up out to 3-point line—be there as player receives ball. Overplay to the left/right on perimeter."

Give your player (and team defense) specific responsibilities in this match-up.

1# Hardaway

Playing @ All-Star level! Excellent ball-handling + passing skills—both transition + 1/2 court. Will pull up for jumper out to 3pt. range. Will post up our #1's. Will isolate. Drives both ways. Spin moves; change of pace. Size a plus on long entries to post. Notch lob off of UCLA alt. Pick/Rolls.

2# ANDERSON

Strong physical/athletic characteristics are pluses. Perimeter shooter with 3pt range—41% in play offs @ 3PT. Will post-up + iso on drop action—left side. Can rebound at this position. Will back in off dribble. Will take quick shot on advance pass in transition.

How to Play

- Slow down + contain push-ups.
- Keep him out of the lane.
- Watch spin-out lob action.
- Prepare to defend post-ups + isolations.
- Must locate + box out on all shots—^{ball} is a rebounder at this position.
- Take care of the ball—^{ball} is a good defender on/off.
- Must locate + pick up early in transition—out to 3pt line.
- On post-ups—stay on feet. Will make strong turns, spins, + power. Don't foul!
- Take away quick 1st step. Need good ball up + ball down action.
- Keep body in front of him. No middle!

2. Transition and/or Early Offense

a. Comment on and diagram the opponent's fast break. Are they an open-court, all-out attacking team? Do they look to push the ball at every opportunity or will they run only out of special opportunity situations? Will they run after both makes and misses? Whom do they get the ball to? Who is capable of rebounding and dribbling out to start the break? Whom inbounds the ball? Will they make advance passes up court for quick perimeter shots? What lanes and/or spots are filled on the break and by whom? To what extent will they test your transition defense,

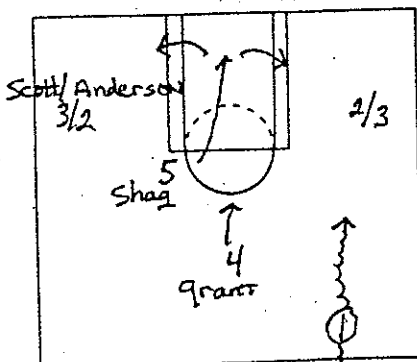
and what are the keys to containing this part of the opponent's game?

b. Do they run a "secondary" or early type of offense (action on push-ups before going into set offense)? Diagram and show spots filled.

Examples of early offense are: early post-up of first trailer, early pick-and-roll action, low crossing action by wings, second trailer action—swinging or reversing the ball, through action (passing and cutting lane), motion offense and/or passing game, etc.

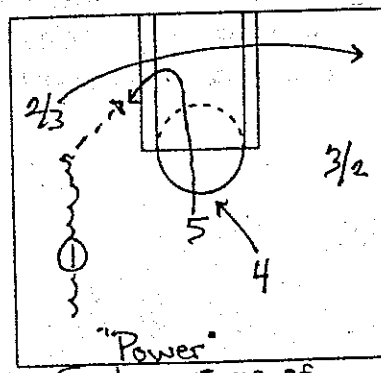
ORLANDO - Transition

- ① Hardaway will attack on dribble! Looks for penetration +/- or kick-outs to spot up shooters. Will advance the ball up court w/pass to 3 pt shooters. Scott + Anderson @ wings.
- ② Early post-ups - "Power" for O'Neal; some post-ups/iso for Anderson + Hardaway.
- ③ "Seattle" action; "Seattle" action w/flare.
- ④ EARLY PICK/ROLL ACTION
- ⑤ LOOP ACTION ⑥ Bump ACTION / EARLY
- ⑧ Weakside Pin Down / post
- ⑨ 2ND TRAILER ACTION ⑩ Through ACTION ⑪ CROSS ACTION.

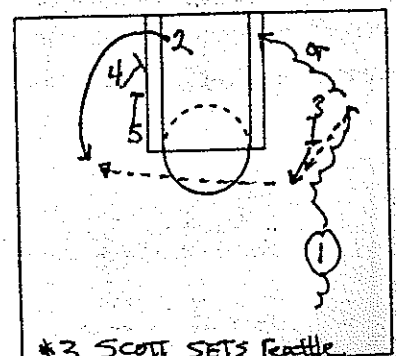


Push-ups

NOTE: O'Neal will get out and run the floor. Downs middle - post/ball side Grant w/4 is 2nd trailer



"Power" Early post-up of O'Neal



*3 SCOTT SETS Seattle

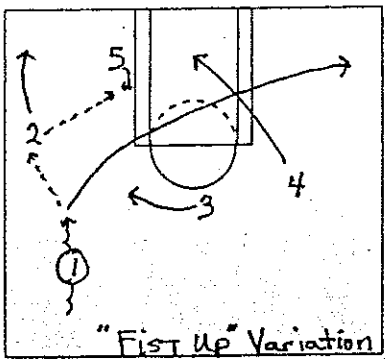
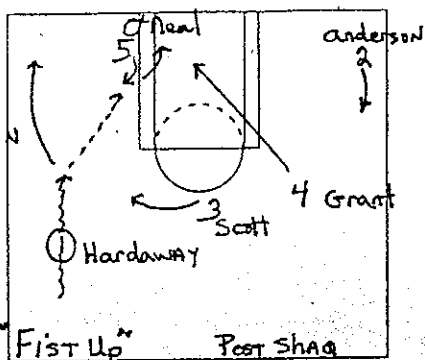
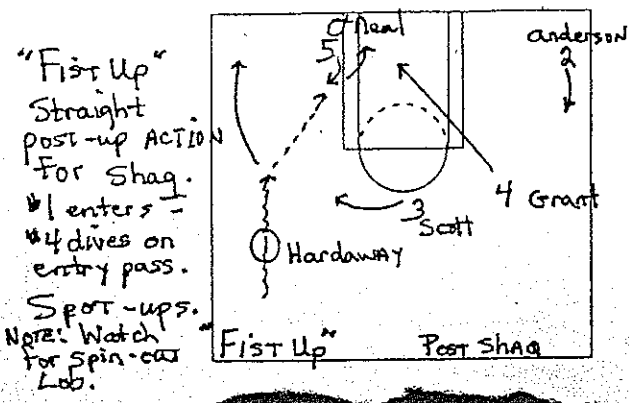
ACTION:
 *2 Anderson comes off stagger on weakside.
 *1 Hardaway is very capable off quick drive off of #3 pick. "Sideline"

3. Half-Court Offensive Sets

- a. Get verbal calls and visual signals for all of the half-court offensive sets, plays, and action.
- b. Diagram all half-court offense (and make individual diagrams showing player and ball movement). Show all options and continuity. Give a brief description of the action. Show primary and secondary options. Diagrams may be grouped according to type of plays: all pick-and-roll action, all post-ups, etc.

- c. Frequencies: Note the number of times each play was run and comment on the efficiency of the play.
- d. Note any tendencies and/or variations.
- e. How did the opponents vs. the team being scouted defend the offense and how effective were they? What adjustment, if any, did the offense make? For example: How did the opponent defend post-ups, pick-and-rolls, screening, isolations, and other half-court offensive action?

Orlando: Half Court - Post-ups (Examples)



#1 (Hardaway) enters to #2 (Anderson) @ wing + cuts through.
#2 makes entry pass to #5 (Shaq).
Spot-ups Grant (#4) dives

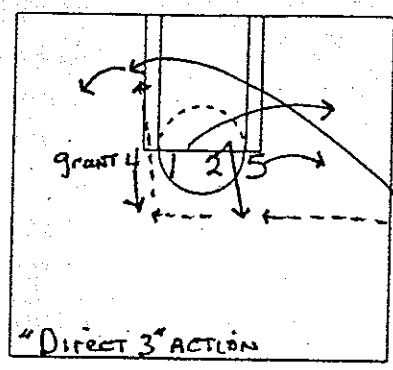
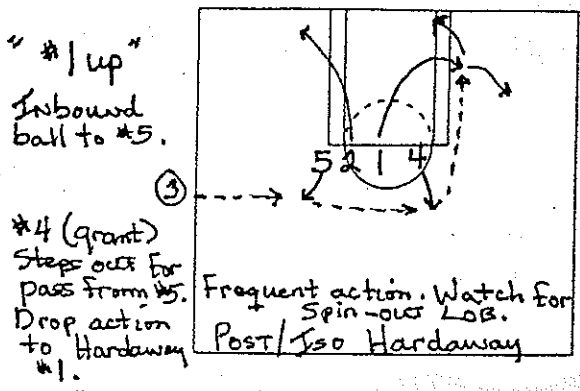
4. Special Situation—Offense

- a. Out-of-Bounds Plays: Diagrams of all sideline and baseline out-of-bounds plays. Get verbal and/or visual signals of each play. Show primary and secondary options.
- b. Diagrams of offensive plays used in specific situations such as end-of-quarter, short-clock situations, end-of-game strategies, 3-point plays, "go to" plays, special plays coming out of time-outs, and other situations that came up in the game scouted.

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OUT OF BOUNDS Situations

A. Sideline



Post up/Iso #3 Scott.
Swing ball to #4 stepping out.
Drop to Scott #3.

5. Team Defense

a. Diagram and show initial positioning for all zone alignments. Show slides and rotations for various ball locations. Note strengths and weaknesses.

b. Pressing/Trapping Defenses Used—both in half-court and full-court. Diagram alignments and show where they would like to trap, amount of pressure, objective of the press, and suggestions in attacking.

c. How did they defend out-of-bounds situations (zone or man-to-man) and with what alignments?

d. Man-to-Man Defense: Note how they defended various aspects of the opponents' offensive game (and comment on effectiveness), such as pick-and-rolls, post-ups, low-cross screening action, pin-down screens, curls, isolations, back screens, and any other action observed.

Final Evaluation and Areas to Concentrate On

1. List Offensive Strengths and Weaknesses

2. List Defensive Strengths and Weaknesses

3. List Team Characteristics

Best offensive rebounders, shot-blockers, post-up players, 3-point shooters; weakest/best foul shooters; weakest defenders (vs. our match-up), and any other category that you may want to list.

4. List of Offensive Sets: Calls & Descriptions of Plays

5. List What We Must Do To Win

Make a list of the key things that we must do vs. this opponent in order to win the game. These "keys" may apply to individuals as well as to the team in general and will be the major focus of game preparation/strategies. Examples: "We must control the tempo—cannot

get into an up-and-down-the-floor game. Make it 5 on 5!" "We must have great transition defense/defensive balance. They will attack at every opportunity!" "Must box out all positions—guards are capable rebounders!" "We must be prepared to defend the side pick-and-roll game vs. #1 and #5 people." "Must pick up point guard early—slow down and contain—keep him out of the lane!"

Other information that will aid in the game preparation: statistics of games scouted, individual and team season statistics, prior scouting reports, notes from previous games vs. this opponent, and additional game tapes if available. The Rockets' coaching staff will review a number of tapes in addition to the video breakdowns/outtakes prepared by the video coordinator.

Joe Ash has 15 years of experience in the NBA. Before joining the Houston Rockets as advance scout four years ago, he worked for the Philadelphia 76ers. He also spent 13 years as a high school coach in Nebraska, Iowa, and New Jersey.

What We Must Do To Win:

- ① Must constantly communicate w/bench. Crowd noise level is high!!
- ② Must locate perimeter shooters early + pick up at 3pt spots. They will shoot quick!
- ③ Do not leave Scott or Anderson on perimeter. Hardaway also a perimeter threat.
- ④ Contain HARDAWAY—pick up early—slow him down + keep him out of middle.
- ⑤ Must pressure up on ball/passers on post-ups/direct drop plays. Bother passes.
- ⑥ We will need to have great transition defense/balance. They will come at us!
- ⑦ No stabbing or slow reacting—must get back on defense quickly!!
- ⑧ Must Box out at ALL Positions. Must limit offensive rebounds.
- ⑨ Do not let Shaq split "REDS" get there quickly!!