

PLAYER POSITIONS

Point guard

Also known as #1. The point guard is the team's best dribbler and is primarily responsible for bringing the ball up court and, in professional teams, directing the offence. Two other important roles for the point guard are (i) if a team mate gets caught with the ball, the guards are responsible for getting an open passing lane, which means there are no defenders between the ball handler and the pass receiver. It is not up to the ball handler, when in trouble, to throw a great pass; (ii) providing defensive balance or the 'safety' position. That is, working with the shooting guard to ensure an offensive person is always playing high to inhibit an opposition fast break.

Shooting guard

Also known as #2. The shooting guard is a very good outside shooter with good dribbling skills. As with the point guard, two other important roles for the shooting guard are (i) if a team mate gets caught with the ball, the guards are responsible for getting an open passing lane; (ii) providing defensive balance or the 'safety' position. That is, working with the point guard to ensure an offensive person is always playing high to inhibit an opposition fast break. The shooting guard will often have point guard duties in a game to give the point guard a rest and to improve the skills and experience of the shooting guard.

Small forward

Also known as #3. The small forward is known for strong drives to the basket, especially along the baseline. The #3 is a good rebounder with a descent shooting range. In junior teams the small forward and the shooting guard are often interchangeable. However, it important the player knows what their role is when they are on the court. As subs come onto the court it is not unusual for the coach to say 'Stu, you're playing shooting guard now'.

Power forward

Also known as #4. The power forward is a very strong rebounder and aggressive under the basket at both ends of the court and scores most points around the basket. In junior basketball the coach often needs to tell the power forward to stay down low (that is, near the basket). In junior teams the power forward and the centre are often interchangeable. However, it important the player knows what their role is when they are on the court. As subs come onto the court it is not unusual for the coach to say 'Alice, you're playing centre now, give me those boards'.

Centre

Also known as #5. The centre is usually the tallest player on the team. The centre is a strong rebounder and shot rejector and can be the intimidator on the defensive end. The centre scores off low post moves and rebounds.