



by Gregg Popovich

THE OFFENSIVE SETS OF THE SAN ANTONIO SPURS, NBA CHAMPIONS 2005

Gregg Popovich was an assistant coach of the San Antonio Spurs for four years, before he went to the Golden State Warriors in 1992 as an assistant coach. He was named general manager of the San Antonio Spurs in 1994 and became the head coach in 1996. His teams have won three NBA championships (1999, 2003, and 2005), and he was named "NBA Coach of the Year" for his efforts in the 2002-2003 season. Popovich was an assistant coach on the bronze-medal winning U.S. basketball team at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens.

The San Antonio Spurs, the most "international" of the NBA teams, beat the Detroit Pistons in seven games, winning the NBA Championship for the third time in seven years. Tim Duncan won his third MVP title in three different finals, proving that he is the successful leader of the team. Manu Ginobili played a key role for the team, especially helping the team in Game 1 and Game 2. The Argentinean player had lots of offensive punch and a highly effective defense during the Finals, lessening the pressure brought to Duncan and Tony Parker by the Detroit defense.

The offensive plays we use have been mostly built on the perimeter and they exploit the skills of Tim Duncan, an all-around player, who is able to play close to the basket, as well as shoot from medium distance. In addition to Duncan, the team is dangerous to our opponents because of the offensive penetrations of Parker and Ginobili, and the precise shooting of Bruce Bowen and Robert Horry. Horry is a special player, extremely lethal during the crucial moments, especially in the Game Five, when he scored the decisive three-point shot that won

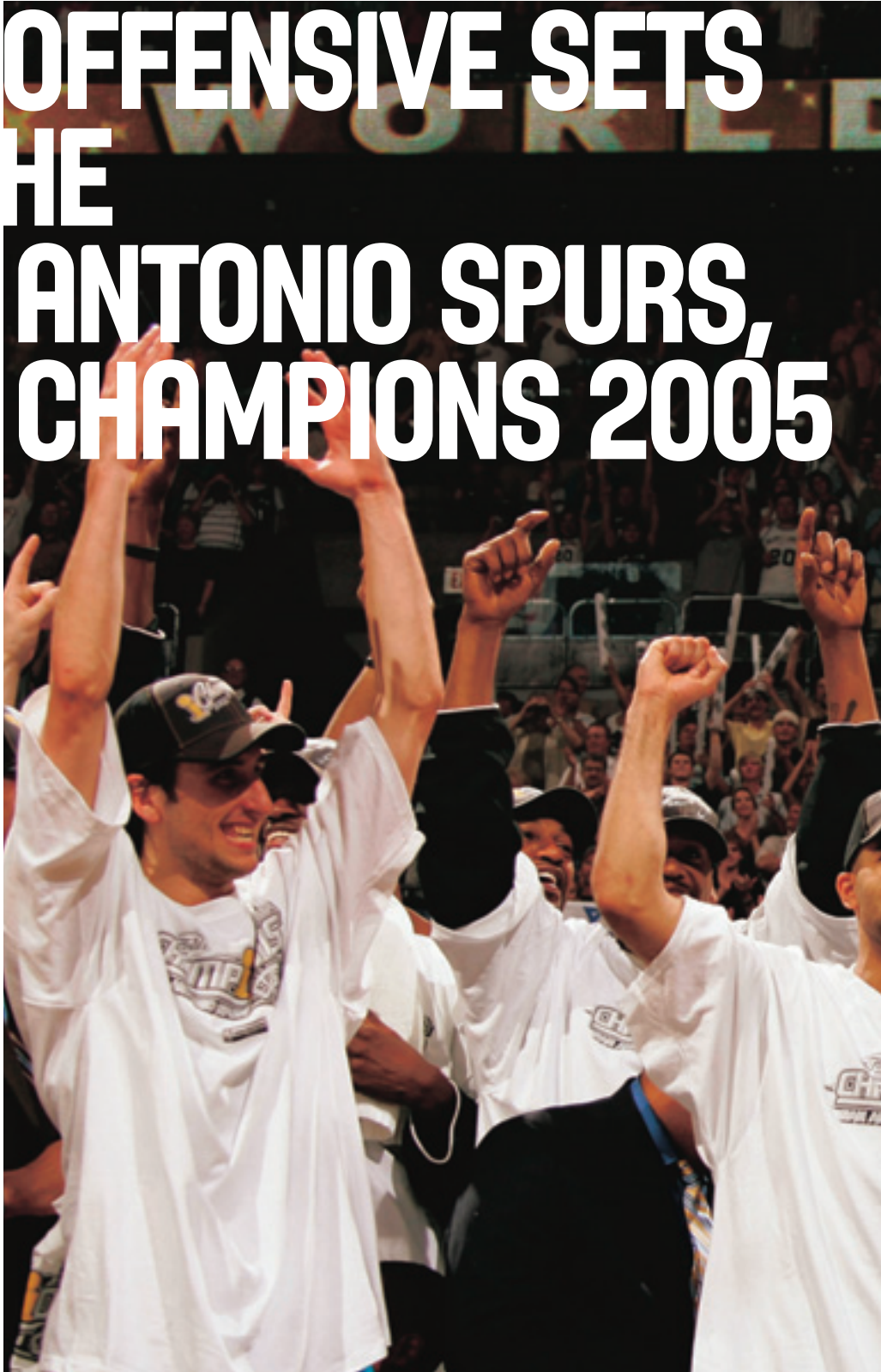
the game for us. The three-point shot has been one of the most effective weapons we had against the Pistons, allowing us to dominate Rasheed Wallace and Ben Wallace, the Detroit Piston players that worked the defensive lanes.

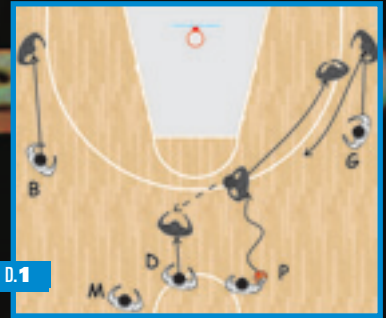
Note: In the following diagrams, players are identified by the first letter of their last name.

TRANSITION OFFENSE

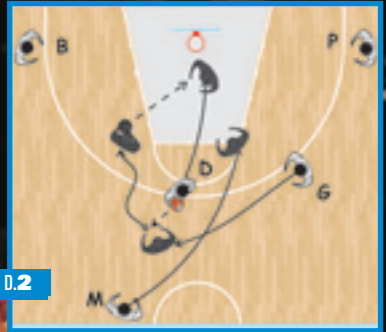
Parker dribbles in the middle zone of the court and passes the ball to Duncan, while Ginobili runs to the right corner and Bowen to the left corner. Parker then sets a pick for Ginobili, who goes to the free-throw line and receives the ball from Duncan to shoot (diagr. 1).

Nazr Mohammed, who is the trailer, occu-





D.1



D.2

pies the left corner of the free-throw line. If Ginobili cannot receive a pass from Duncan, he cuts around Mohammed and gets the ball from Duncan and then they play pick-and-roll (diagr. 2). A second transition attack begins when Parker dribbles to the left corner, where Ginobili is located; this is a sign for Ginobili to go and make a backscreen for Duncan,

while Mohammed, sets a pick for Bowen. Duncan receives the ball from Parker (diagr. 3). If Duncan cannot get the ball, Parker passes it to Ginobili, who is out at the three-point line. Ginobili passes the ball to Bowen, while Mohammed, around the baseline, makes a pick for Duncan, who cuts and receives the ball from Bowen (diagr. 4).

MAIN SET AGAINST A MAN-TO-MAN DEFENSE

Parker dribbles on the left side to Ginobili, who cuts from the lane and goes under the basket; then he comes out to the free-throw line, exploiting a vertical screen from Duncan. At the same time, Bowen makes a double screen with Mohammed on the right side. Parker can then pass the ball to Ginobili (diagr. 5).

If Ginobili can't shoot, Parker cuts to the lane, exploiting the double screen of Bowen and Mohammed. Bowen cuts well around the baseline and goes to the other side of the court. Parker receives from Ginobili and shoots, or he can pass the ball to Mohammed, who's in the low-post position (diagr. 6).

If no shot is possible, Ginobili receives a high pick from Duncan and receives the ball from Parker to shoot close to the basket (diagr. 7).

OPTION

Ginobili, after the pick from Duncan, dribbles to the right side and passes the ball to Bowen, who had cut on the baseline to go to the corner. He can also play pick-and-roll with Duncan, who had rolled to the basket after the pick (diagr. 8).

Another possibility with the starting lineup is that Parker can receive a pick from Duncan out of the lane, while Ginobili cuts on the baseline and exploits the double screen of Mohammed and Bowen, who, after the pick, cuts and goes to the opposite corner. Parker has two choices: he can exploit the pick of Duncan by dribbling to the right line and then pass the ball to Ginobili (who can shoot or pass the ball to Mohammed in the low-post position), or he can dribble to the left side and pass the ball to Bowen. Parker can also pass the ball directly to Duncan, who rolled to the basket after the pick-and-roll. Whomever receives the ball from Parker (Ginobili or Bowen) can pass the ball to Duncan, who is open to the ball (diagr. 9).

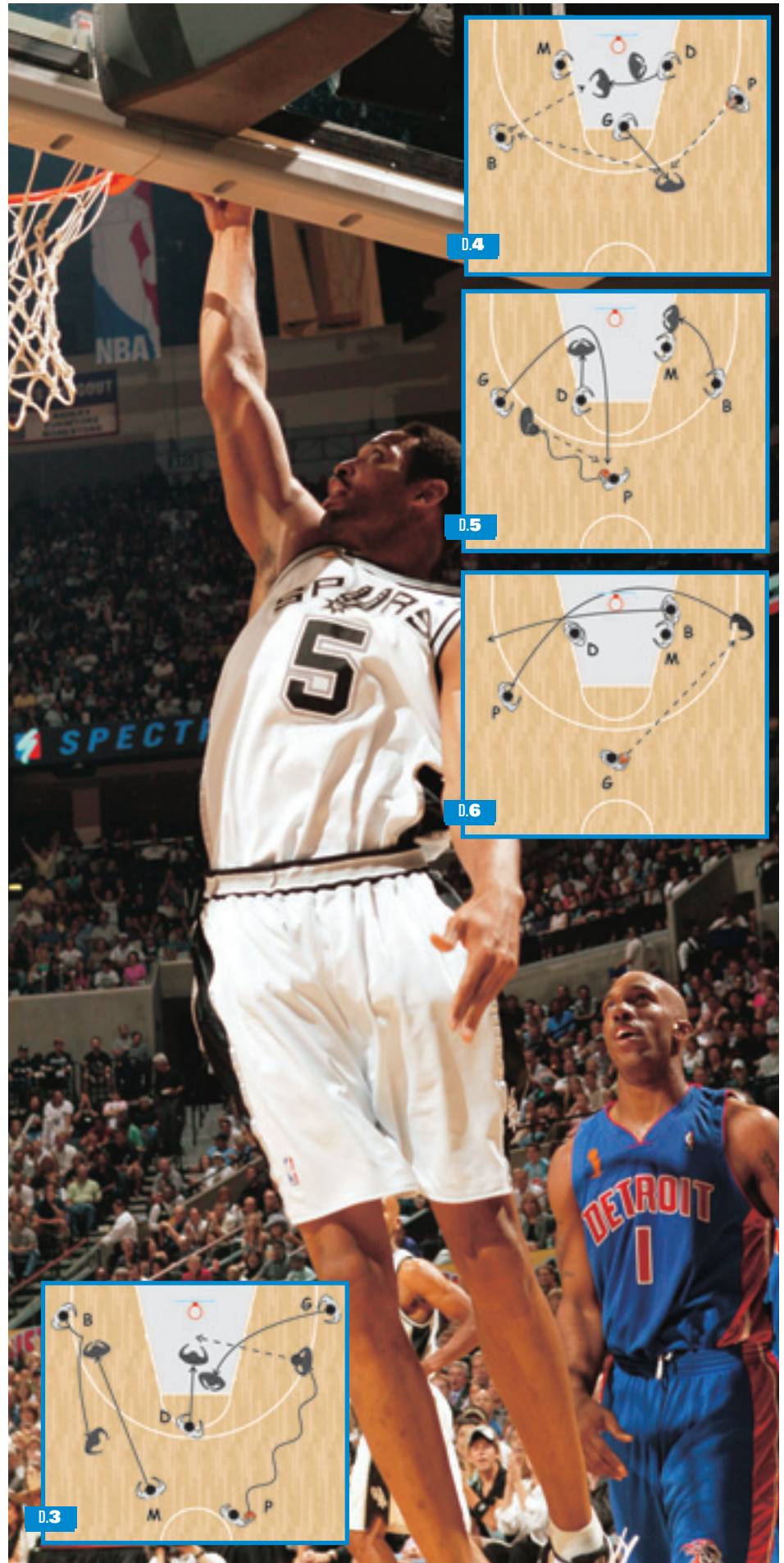
LOOP 4 ICE

The ball is in Parker's hands and he is on the right side of the court: Bowen comes from the low-post position and exploits the pick from Mohammed, who is in the high-post position on the corner of the free-throw line. He comes out to the three-point line to get the ball and shoot. While Bowen cuts, Ginobili receives a backscreen from Duncan on the other side of the court: Bowen can pass to Ginobili or Duncan, who is ready to receive the ball under the basket after the pick for Ginobili (diagr. 10).

If these choices aren't possible, Bowen passes the ball again to Parker, and Parker to Ginobili, who has cut, going to the right corner. He has a large portion of the court open to him to now play one-on-one (diagr. 11).

WEDGE ROLL

Parker has the ball, Duncan fakes to cut in the lane first, and then he makes a



lateral pick to Parker. In the meantime, Ginobili fakes to screen the screener and then he cuts to the lane to receive the ball from Parker (diagr. 12).

15 (RUB TOP HEAD)

This is a play that offers the possibility of a three-point shot for three players. We use it when Robert Horry, our three-point specialist, is on the court.

Parker receives a high pick in the central lane of the court from Duncan, while Ginobili, Bowen and Horry are out at the three-point line. Parker exploits the pick of Duncan and can pass the ball to Bowen or to Ginobili in the corners, or to Horry who has come to the middle of the court. Parker can also pass to Duncan, who is ready to receive the ball after the pick (diagr. 13).

DOUBLE FIST

Also in this play, Parker has the ball during the attack, while Duncan and Horry are in high-post positions on the corner of the free-throw line. Ginobili and Bowen are on the low corners, out at the free-throw line. Duncan, in this case (or Horry), makes a pick for Parker, who exploits the pick and can pass to Ginobili in the corner, to Duncan, who is open to the ball and turns to the basket, or to Horry, who came out to the free-throw line to get the ball. Horry passes to Bowen, who came up to receive the ball (diagr. 14).

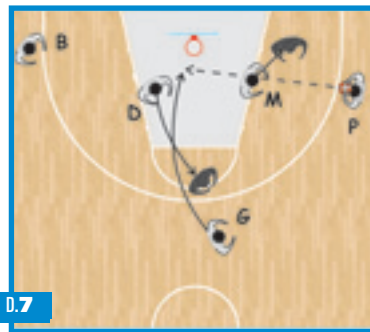
FLOPPY

Parker passes the ball to Duncan, who is on the free-throw line, as Bowen cuts backdoor and goes to the right corner. After the pass, Parker makes a pick for Ginobili, who receives the ball from Duncan to drive to the basket, exploiting the empty space left by Bowen, who has been followed by his direct defender, leaving the left corner of the court free (diagr. 15).

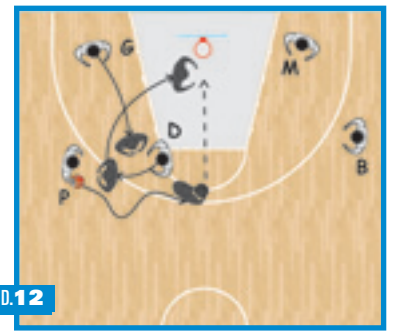
STRONG

Parker, who is in the left wing, passes the ball to Mohammed, who came up to go to the central position. Mohammed passes the ball to Bowen on the right wing.

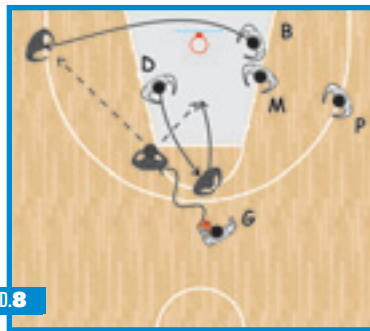
Ginobili receives two staggered screens, the first one from Parker, the second one from Mohammed, while Duncan cuts to the lane and goes to low-post position in the right corner: Bowen can pass the ball to Ginobili or to Duncan (diagr. 16).



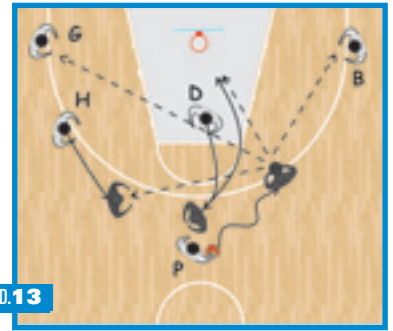
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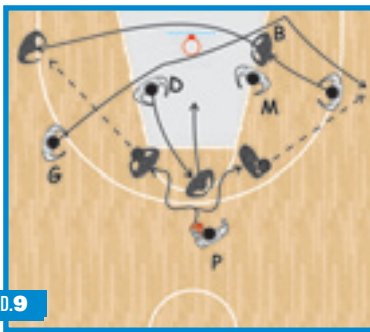
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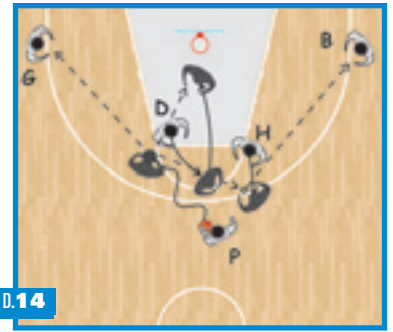
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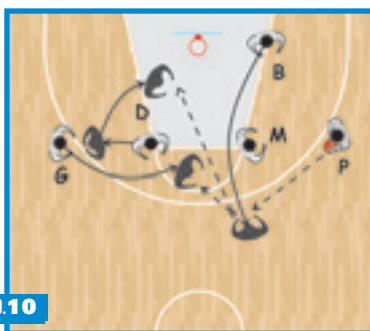
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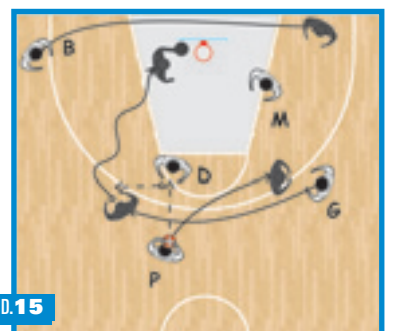
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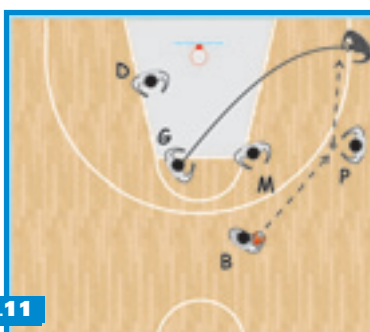
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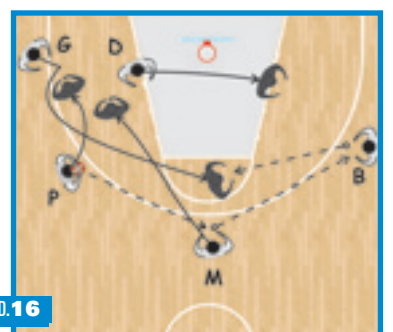
D.10



D.15



D.11



D.16