

THE ELBOW-IN-PUSH JUMP SHOT: LIMITED ATTACK CAPABILITY

By Robert Tiltz

The elbow-in-push jump shot is a hybrid of the elbow-in-strokesnap jump shot's shooting stance and the whole-body elbow-out jump shot's straightstroke-push release. The elbow-in-push jump shot likely evolved by way of a simple and successful modification of the elbow-in-strokesnap jump shot's unworkable strokesnap release. This analysis of the elbow-in-push jump shot finds that all of its weaknesses are attributable to the elbow-in-strokesnap jump shot's elbow-in shooting stance and all of its strengths are attributable to the whole-body elbow-out jump shot's straightstroke-push release.

In the hands of players like Chris Bosh, Gordon Hayward, Anthony Davis and Bradley Beal, the elbow-in-push jump shot gets the job done. Its numbers are impressive and it looks pretty good too. But it is not nitpicking to point out that the elbow-in-push jump shot's too-low and too-far-out-front shooting position causes athleticism and protection problems. The too-low and too-far-out-front start and finish of the elbow-in-push release disconnects by distance from the jumpshooter's body, which is the source of jump shot athleticism. The too-low and too-far-out-front disconnect also costs body-wedge protection while exposing the basketball, which hurts most at mid-range and on the inside where defensive pressure is greatest. On balance, when given the room to operate, the elbow-in-push jump shot is a nice piece of work, but athleticism and protection shortcomings limit the elbow-in-push jump shot's attack capability.



From left to right, Chris Bosh, Gordon Hayward, Anthony Davis and Bradley Beal

The specifics of the elbow-in-push jump shot's athleticism problems mainly derive from the too-low and too-far-out-front location of the elbow-in shooting position for the start of the release are shooting shoulder related. Most importantly, the too-low and too-far-out-front location prevents the shooting shoulder from rolling back to activate as a source of whole-body athleticism and whole-body power by way of engagement with the release mechanism. No rollback, no engagement and no activation mean no forward rotation of the shooting shoulder during the release, which adds up to the removal the shooting shoulder from the release.

The athleticism of the elbow-in-push jump shot suffers two especially serious problems because of the exclusion of the shooting shoulder from the release. The first problem is that the merge of the jump of the jump shot with the release of the jump shot is lost because the forward rotation of the shooting shoulder is the dynamic that channels the athleticism and the power of the jump into the release. The second problem is that the square-in-the-air jump that many strongside pull-up

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jump shots require and all could use is lost because the forward rotation of the shooting shoulder is the primary power source for the rotation of the square-in-the-air jump. Plus, the too-low location of the elbow-in shooting position cuts short the arm action that helps to power the jump of the jump shot as it raises the basketball to the shooting position.

Despite the exclusion of the shooting shoulder from the release, which is to say, despite the exclusion of a primary whole-body power source, the elbow-in-push jump shot is good to go in the power production department. That's because the arm power of the straightstroke-push release can compensate for much of the power that is lost because of the exclusion of the shooting shoulder from the release.

The elbow-in-push jump shot is most effective when given space to operate. The elbow-in-push jump shot needs space because of its athleticism and protection problems. If the elbow-in-push jumpshooter has a height advantage, then the athleticism and protection problems can be somewhat mitigated. That's because by itself a height advantage can create vertical separation against smaller defenders. But size advantages come and go. That's one reason elbow-in-push jumpshooters large and small usually rely on the easy to execute if not very athletic weakside stepback move to create separation from defenders.

Despite its athleticism and protection problems, the elbow-in-push jump shot is fairly popular with players of all sizes, many of whom get good results because of the power, accuracy and touch of its straightstroke-push release. But because of the athleticism and protection problems, those who shoot the elbow-in-push jump shot are largely unable to attack with the jump shot. Indeed, that is probably the main reason elbow-in-push jumpshooters usually shoot weakside stepback and weakside fallaway jump shots.

Steve Nash was another player who used the elbow-in-push jump shot. By criticizing the elbow-in-push jump shot, no disrespect to Nash is intended. Nash was a great shotmaker. But Nash's offensive repertoire did not include an attack jump shot. The blame for that deficiency goes to Nash's athletically limited and poorly-protected elbow-in-push jump shot. In effect, the argument made here is that Bosh, Hayward, Davis, Beal and Nash became great basketball players in spite of the elbow-in-push jump shot, not because of it. And by extension, this argument also holds that the whole-body jump shot theory's elbow-out jump shot would have made Bosh, Hayward, Davis, Beal and Nash even greater basketball players.



Steve Nash