On ball defense seems to be one of the most difficult facets of NBA 2K for the average player. While it may be easier to not play defense on the ball handler, understanding proper on ball defense can be your biggest advantage over an opponent.

The key is knowing when to be aggressive and when to give space.

Lay-Off The Turbo
The biggest misconception when guarding the player with the ball is that you must always be in the player’s face and trying to steal the ball. This technique only proves beneficial if you are an elite defender guarding a bad ball handler. If defending a player who uses an offensive threat, you must play off the players’ weaknesses.

In order to do so, proper use of the R2 and L2 triggers must be understood. Holding the sprint R2 trigger while defending is one of the easiest ways to give up an easy basket. The trade-off to moving quicker is that you will have less control over the player’s actions. You should only press R2 if you are in need of quickly getting to a spot defensively to make a play or running to catch a defender.

If you are in front of your defender, you can react better to the player dribbling if you aren’t holding R2. Holding R2 and trying to dictate which way the scorer is going is the easiest way to get crossed up. Therefore, it is best to stay in front of your defender and only begin holding R2 when your defender has been whipped.

Stay In Front Of The Ball

The best way to stay in front of the ball is to lay off R2 and give enough space to react. Giving up a jump shot is always better than a lay up.

You provide enough space, you can decipher which way the scorer is going, and thwart their first move (in which most scorers will hold R2) and then use R2 afterwards to give your defender the advantage. If you have already been bullied to the post and have the tough task of stopping a basket near the basket, use L2.

It is the intense D trigger, and it strengthens your defender’s position. This can stop a post man from backing you down or bring you close enough to disrupt the easy basket.

For example, if you are playing with Chris Wilcox and you are defending Dwight Howard, this technique may not do any good once the center is already posted up but it is your best effort (bring the double team in your playing Dwight...).

Stopping Post Players

Another key feature to on-ball defense is utilizing the right joystick. Holding the right joystick puts your hands up so you can stop a pass or close off a lane. Once you are holding your hands up defensively you can maneuver them left or right to prevent passes.

This is great for a double team on a center because it can cut off a whole area of activity forcing a bad play for the ball handler. And they pass it and you can see who is open you can move your hands and stop the pass, opening up a steal and possible fast break opportunity.

Now that you understand how to stay in front of a ball handler and bother them down low, you gotta pick and choose when to be aggressive. Guarding a premier player like Carmelo Anthony or Kevin Durant, you are better off aggressively chasing down every shot and quickly switch to the help D.
Those guarding Lebron James or Paul George should be defending with more space because giving up jump shots is ideal so long they are not practice shots. Counting on help defense against someone who is known for dunking is not a good move. Keep them in front of you and just let them shoot it.

Regardless of which NBA player is being used, what matters most is the user playing with them and figuring out if they are better shooting with that NBA player or taking it to the basket, and not letting them do what they want to do.