

2016-17

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Consistency

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Do you cause confusion with your flap-in-the-wind fingers?

Eleven Basketball Myths

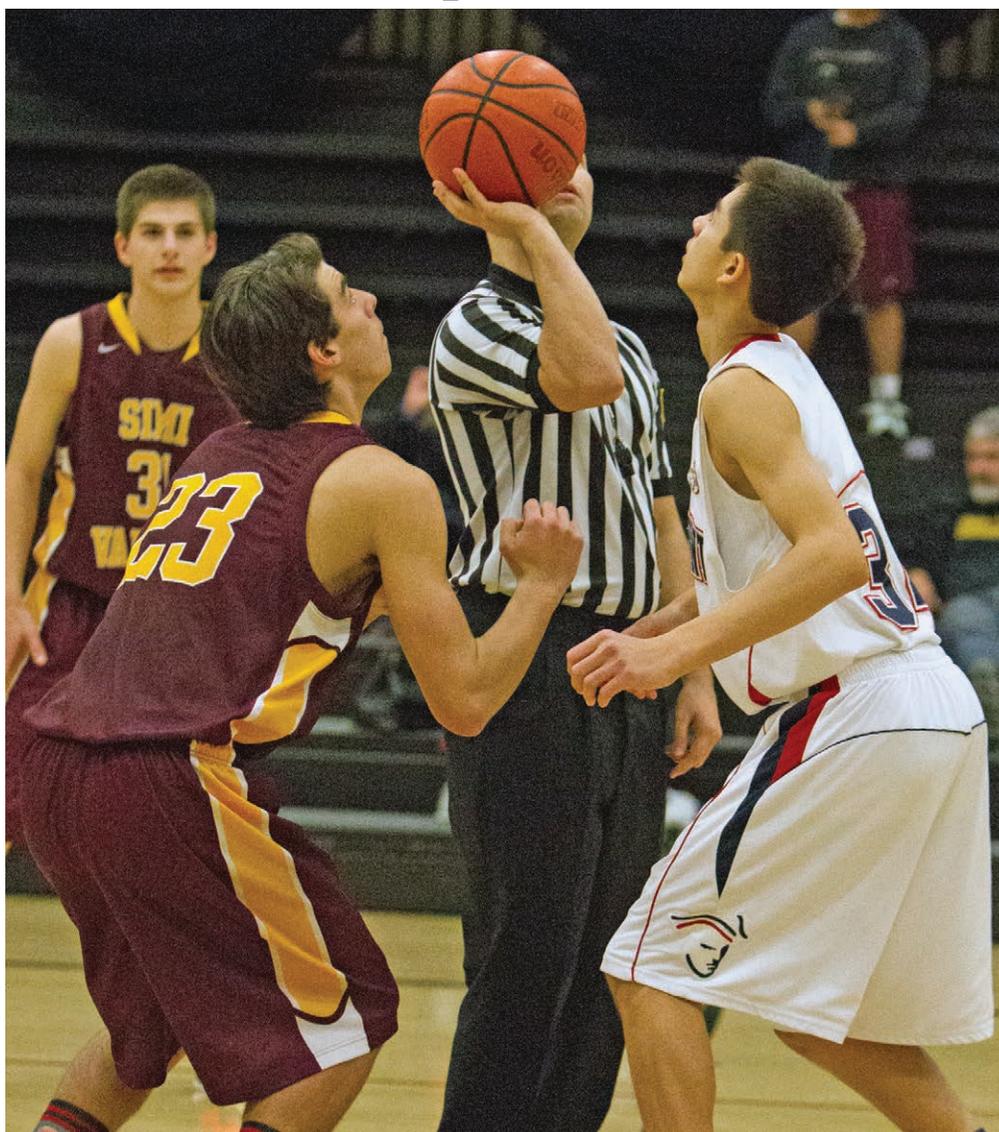
Over the years, coaches, players and fans have all demonstrated their lack of rules knowledge. Some of the things yelled about have been passed down through generations, giving them such allure that many people actually believe them to be true. Here are a few plays that the so-called “experts” are certain they know how we should handle, but which, in reality, are merely rules myths.

1. After a player has ended a dribble and fumbled the ball, that player may not recover it without violating.

Reality: A dribble ends when the dribbler catches the ball with one or both hands, simultaneously touches the ball with both hands, an opponent bats the ball or the ball becomes dead (4-15-4). A fumble is the accidental loss of player control when the ball unintentionally drops or slips from a player’s grasp (4-21).

Ever see a player dribble the ball, fumble the ball and then hover over the ball trying to shield the ball from an opponent? The player is usually exhorting a teammate to recover the ball. That player has never been taught that it is always legal to recover a fumble. The rules do not penalize clumsiness.

A player who ends a dribble as a result of touching the ball with two hands simultaneously and then fumbles the ball in an attempt to catch the ball may always retrieve the fumbled ball without it being ruled a double dribble. However, after the fumbled ball has been retrieved, the dribbler may not start a new dribble. That is a double dribble. Conversely, a player who catches or intercepts a pass and fumbles the ball, may recover the ball and then



Tip off your season with a good start knowing the jump ball provisions. A jumper may never catch the jump ball until the ball has been touched by a non-jumper or the jump ball ends. Matt Kitagawa, Camarillo, Calif.

+ See “Eleven Myths” p.2



+ Eleven Myths continued from p. 1

begin a dribble. It is not a double dribble. Remember, a player may always recover a fumble. Whether the player may dribble again depends on whether the player had previously dribbled.

Want to really incite the fans? Watch a player fumble or muff a pass, grasp the ball, begin a dribble, fumble the ball while attempting to catch the ball at the end of the dribble, and then proceed to catch or grasp the ball. The correct ruling? The play legal! Remember it this way — you can fumble, dribble, fumble; you cannot dribble, fumble, dribble.

2. A try touched by a defensive player near the ring is always goaltending.

Reality: In order for goaltending to occur, five things must happen: There must be a try or a tap for a field goal; the ball must be on its downward flight; the entire ball must be above the level of the basket ring; the ball must have a possibility of entering the basket; and the ball must not be touching the imaginary cylinder which has the basket ring as its lower base (4-22-1). If any one of those things does not happen, you cannot have a goaltending violation.

If a defensive player makes contact with the ball immediately after the ball leaves the shooter's hands, the ball probably has not begun its downward flight. If the defensive player makes contact with the ball more than midway between the shooter and the basket, it may be goaltending provided you determine the ball had a reasonable chance to enter the basket. If all other goaltending criteria are present, yet it is obvious the ball will fall short of the basket, it is not a goaltending violation.

3. After being out of bounds, a player must have both feet on the court to be considered inbounds (and the player may not be the first to touch the ball inbounds if the player was the last to touch the ball before going out of bounds).

Reality: Here is a play: A1 is racing downcourt to catch a long pass. The pass deflects off A1's hands, with the ball staying inbounds and A1's momentum carrying A1 out of bounds. A1, in returning to the court, has one foot inbounds and the other foot in the air when: (a) A1 is the first to touch the ball inbounds; (b) A2 picks up the ball and passes the ball to A1. Violation in either case? No!

Let's look at the applicable rule: The location of a player is determined by where the player is touching the floor (4-35-1). A

player who touches the floor inbounds is considered to be inbounds, without any requirement that both of the player's feet touch inbounds. The location of an airborne player is based on when the player was last in contact with the floor (4-35-3).

Now the tough part — applying the rule to the play. A1 last touched the ball while both the ball and A1 were inbounds. When A1 touches one foot to the floor inbounds with the other foot in the air after being out of bounds, A1 is considered to be inbounds. Since A1 had not previously dribbled, not only could A1 be the first player to touch or pick up the ball, but A1 could start a dribble. The same principle applies when A2 picks up the ball and passes it to A1. Unless A1 delays returning to the court after legally being out of bounds (10-4-2), A1 may receive a pass when returning to the court having one foot inbounds and the other foot in the air, that foot last having touched the floor out of bounds. Since the location of an airborne player is the same as when the player was last in contact with the floor, with no specific requirement that both feet touch inbounds, A1 is considered to be inbounds when the first foot touches inbounds and no part of A1's body is touching out of bounds. It might look funny, but it is not a violation.

4. An offensive player who catches the ball in the air must have room to come down with the ball.

Reality: If the defensive player moves to a spot on the floor and is in legal guarding position before the offensive player is airborne, the burden is on the offensive player to avoid the contact. If the defensive player is not in legal guarding position when the offensive player leaves the floor, the offensive player must be given room to land with the ball. Once the offensive player touches the floor with just one foot, the defensive player, after initially obtaining legal guarding position with both feet on the floor and facing the offensive player, may step in front of the rapidly moving offensive player. A player-control foul is the ruling. (Understanding how to administer the anticipated technical foul on the offensive player's coach would be helpful.) The cry, "You've got to give the player a step!" only applies to a player who jumps in front of an opponent without the ball.

5. A player with the ball who is straddling the division line and then puts the foot previously in the frontcourt into the backcourt has committed a backcourt violation.

Reality: That is a legal play: no violation. A complete understanding of the backcourt rule is in order here. A team's frontcourt consists of that part of the court between its endline and the nearer edge of the division line, including its basket and the inbounds part of the backboard (4-13-1). A team's backcourt consists of the rest of the court, including the entire division line, the opponent's basket and the inbounds part of the opponent's backboard (4-13-2).

If a player is holding the ball, the ball is considered to be in the backcourt if either the ball or the player is touching the backcourt (4-4-1). Applying that rule to the myth, a player who is holding the ball and straddling the division line is considered to be in the backcourt. By having only one foot in the frontcourt, the player did not achieve frontcourt status.

What about a player who is straddling the division line while dribbling from the backcourt to the frontcourt? During a dribble from backcourt to frontcourt, the ball is in the frontcourt when the ball and both of the dribbler's feet touch the court entirely in the frontcourt (4-4-6).

6. A ball that strikes the top of the backboard is out of bounds.

Reality: Ever have a meeting with the captains when your partner gave inane instructions like, "Black line all the way around," or "The sides of the backboard are inbounds, the top and bottom of the backboard are out of bounds"? While the former may be true (provided the out-of-bounds line is actually black), the latter is a myth.

The ball is out of bounds when it touches an out-of-bounds player, any person, floor or object on or outside a boundary, or if it touches the supports or back of the backboard, the ceiling, overhead equipment or supports (7-1-2). Do not look for a provision in the rules specifying that the ball is out of bounds when it strikes the top of the backboard. You will not find it. It is a myth.

7. Screens that do not give the player being screened time to stop and change direction are always illegal.

Reality: A screener may be as close as possible, provided the screener does not make contact when setting the screen within the visual field of a stationary opponent. When a blind screen is set in the rear outside the visual field of a stationary opponent, the screened player

+ See "Eleven Myths" p.3



+ Eleven Myths
continued from p. 2

must be given room to take a normal step backward.

In all screening situations, in order for a screen to be illegal, there must be contact. The key is the rule provision that states if the screener violates any of (the screening provisions) and contact results, (the player) has committed a personal foul (10-7-3). If the screened player goes around the screen without contacting the screener, it is not an illegal screen even if the screener sets the screen too close to the player being screened.

8. A player who has been screened from the rear commits a foul if the screener is dislodged.

Reality: That is one that the fans go wild over every time. A player who is screened from the rear may contact the screener and not commit a foul. In fact, the player being screened may actually dislodge the screener and not commit a foul. How can that be?

If the player being screened, upon contact with the screener, stops or attempts to stop and move around the screen, it is not a foul on the screened player. The rationale behind the rule? The screener has accomplished the objective and to place the screened player in double jeopardy by ruling a foul in that situation would be contrary to the spirit and intent of the screening principles.

To correctly rule that play, the key is to observe the entire play. If you rule a foul immediately upon contact with the screener, take your eye off the end of the play and do not wait to see if the screened player stops or attempts to stop upon contact, you place the screened player at a disadvantage. See the entire play to make the correct decision.

9. A jumper may never catch the jump ball if it has not been touched by another player.

Reality: Jumpers may not touch the ball before it reaches its highest point, they may not leave the center-restraining circle until the ball has been touched, they may not catch the ball, nor may they touch the ball more than twice. Those restrictions end when the ball contacts a non-jumper, the floor, a basket or backboard (6-4-7).

The play is simple if you know the rule. If the jump ball is touched by jumper A1 then falls to the floor, it is permissible for jumper B1 to catch or pick up the ball before it is touched by one of the non-jumpers. Resist the urge to blow the whistle while the fans go nuts.

10. A player who blocks a field-goal try or tap and, in so doing, pins the ball to the backboard above the ring always commits basket interference.

Reality: Cutting to the chase: It is not a violation to block a field-goal try or tap on its upward or downward flight and pin the ball against the backboard unless basket interference or goaltending has been committed.

If the ball hits the backboard on a field-goal try or tap, is on its downward flight and is then blocked, it is only a violation if the entire ball is above the level of the basket ring, has a possibility of entering the basket and is not touching an imaginary cylinder which has the basket as its lower base. If any of those events occur, goaltending has been committed (4-22).

If a field-goal try or tap is blocked on its downward flight and the ball is pinned against the backboard, it is perfectly legal unless one of the basket-interference provisions has been violated. If the pinned ball is on or within the basket or is pinned to the backboard while any part of the ball is within the imaginary cylinder which has the ring as its lower base, basket interference has been committed (4-6-1, 4-6-2).

What about the play in which a player pins the ball to the backboard but does not violate any of the goaltending or basket-interference provisions? Watch the play, suck on the whistle and pat yourself on the back for not falling for that myth.

11. Officials should not make decisions that decide the outcome of the game.

Reality: Officials do not make rulings that decide the outcomes of games. Players commit fouls or violations; officials view those infractions, judge the action and then apply the rules of the game to what they have viewed. The rules then determine the penalty. The officials do not decide the outcome of a game; the players decide the outcome of the game. If the rule results in the imposition of a penalty that determines the outcome of the game, such is life.

Officials who say that they want the players to decide the outcome of the game do a disservice to the game. There would be no need for officials if that myth was true. Would you rather have the reputation of an official who went into the tank at the end of the game or one who was not afraid to make the ruling when the game was on the line? The ruling is an easy one — make it right at the right time! 📌

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Rule-Change Refresher: Under 15 to Replace

The NFHS Basketball Rules Committee approved rule changes, including an effort to increase game pace during a dead ball, at its April meeting in Indianapolis. The NFHS Board of Directors subsequently approved the changes.

Beyond the rule changes, editorial changes and points of emphasis were approved. The brace definition was also altered to match medical advancements.

Warning horn (2-12-5)

The interval to replace a disqualified player, injured player or when a player is directed to leave the game has been reduced from 20 seconds to 15 seconds. The committee felt the gamesmanship deployed in those situations created a break not intended by rule. A warning horn is always sounded with 15 seconds remaining in any interval. With the new rule, the warning horn sounds when the timer is notified to begin the interval. The referee should remind the table of the new procedure in the pregame.

Play 1: After reporting a foul on B4, the scorer's table notifies the ruling official that B4 has five fouls. The ruling official notifies the coach and player and then requests the timer to begin the replacement interval.

Ruling 1: The official was incorrect to notify the player prior to having the timer begin the replacement interval. The proper order is coach, timer and disqualified player. The official should not be in a rush to go through the process. The official may want to remind the timer to sound the warning horn at the start of the interval.

Play 2: Team A's coach and certified athletic trainer attend to injured A3 on the court. A3 is safely removed after four

minutes. Once A3 has been removed and team A's coach returns to the bench area, the official asks for a replacement player and asks the timer to begin the interval and sound a warning horn. **Ruling 2:** The official was correct to wait until A3 was off the court and team A's coach was refocused on picking a replacement player.

Play 3: A1 and B1 are ejected for fighting following a B1 intentional foul. The officials request a replacement player from both teams' coaches at the same time and then request the timer to begin the 15-second replacement interval. Team B sends B20 to report following five seconds. The horn sounds to end the 15-second interval. After 10 seconds, A10 reports. The officials assess a technical foul to team A's head coach. **Ruling 3:** The officials were correct to assess a technical foul and instruct the timer to begin a 15-second interval since A1 and B1 are ejected, which is a disqualification. The replacement players must report prior to the horn to end the interval. Ejections are emotional and intense for all involved. Confer with the crew to ensure proper administration. Do not rush to start the replacement interval.

Free-throw semicircle (9-1-3h NEW)

The change clarifies last year's interpretation, not in the rulebook, that players in marked free-throw lane spaces may not enter the free-throw semicircle until the ball strikes the ring or the free throw ends. That levels the balance between offense and defense and reduces rough play. An unfair advantage occurs if a free thrower's opponents are allowed to enter the semicircle while the free-throw shooter is restricted from leaving the semicircle until the ball strikes the ring or the free throw ends. The official NFHS court markings do not have a full free-throw circle. When a court has the full circle, only the semicircle from the free-throw line toward the division line is restricted — players may enter the free-throw semicircle that is in the lane below the free-throw line toward the endline (that half-circle is often depicted with dashed lines).

Play 4: B4 is in a marked free-throw lane space after free thrower A1 releases a final free-throw attempt. B4 enters the free-throw semicircle before the ball strikes the ring, contacting A1, whose free-throw attempt is unsuccessful. The officials rule a foul on B4 and award A1 bonus free throws as B4's foul is

the eighth team foul. **Ruling 4:** The officials were correct to rule a foul on B4 — illegal contact occurred. However, they were incorrect to only award bonus free throws. B4 committed a delayed free-throw violation and A1 should have been given a substitute free throw with the free-throw lane cleared prior to the administration of the bonus free throws. Play resumes with the result of A1's bonus free throws.

Logoed undershirts (3-5-6)

The addition was made for undershirts to have one logo on the apparel. The committee hopes the addition of a logo on the undershirt would help ease the time officials needed to enforce uniform violations. It makes the undershirt consistent with all other apparel in that it can have one logo. The color requirements simplified for apparel other than an undershirt remain in place. The undershirt is the only item that must match the color of the jersey, if worn. Remember all other apparel can match the color of the jersey but can also be black, white or beige. If an item is worn, it has to be the same color as worn by all teammates.

Play 5: During warmups A4 is wearing an undershirt with a visible manufacturer's logo on both sleeves. The officials conclude the item is legal since each sleeve only has one logo. **Ruling 5:** The officials are incorrect. The undershirt is illegal since it has two logos. The officials should instruct A4 to correct the matter immediately in warmups. It is important that the officials work with A4 and team A's coach to make both aware of the restrictions on the undershirt while reminding A4 and team A's coach that A4 must leave the confines of the gym before removing the jersey.

Play 6: Following the introduction of team B's players (a) B1 is wearing an undershirt that has a logo near the jersey's v-neck opening, but the undershirt's logo is not visible. B1 also has a logo on the sleeve, and (b) B2 is wearing an undershirt with frayed or ragged edges. The officials direct B1 and B2 to correct the matter and ask team B's coach to replace both starters. Team B's coach sends B1 and B2 to the locker room to remove their undershirts and they are ready before team A's starters are fully

QUICK TIP

When reporting a foul, including the player's number, be sure to slow yourself down. **Your report should be slow, concise and with appropriate pace so that you only have to give the fouler's number once.** Giving the fouler's number twice is a good indicator that you are reporting too fast.

+ See "Deliver Subs Quicker" p.5

+ Deliver Subs Quicker
continued from p. 4

introduced. The coach requests that B1 and B2 start the game since no delay occurred. The officials allow it. **Ruling 6:** In (a), the officials were incorrect to instruct B1 to remove the undershirt. When B1 is standing at a normal position and the logo is not visible, the undershirt is legal as it only has one visible logo. In (b), the officials were correct to have B2 remove the frayed or ragged edges. Those restrictions were not removed with the changes in the undershirt rule. However, the officials erred in requesting replacement players. When a starter is able to correct an issue without preventing an unreasonable delay, no substitute is needed. In those cases, the starters were ready prior to the officials being ready to start the game.

Play 7: A1 wears an undershirt with

one visible logo displayed (a) in the jersey's v-neck area, or (b) on the back collar. **Ruling 7:** An undershirt with one logo in either area is legal. In prior years, a visible logo in either area of the undershirt would have been illegal.

Non-playing personnel (1-20 NEW)

The rules were updated to reflect the guidelines of spirit squads (cheerleaders, dancers, poms, etc.) set forth in their rulebooks — where are appropriate places for them to be during a game. The rule clarifies that no one should be in the free-throw lane area extended out of bounds, including administrators, camera personnel, photographers, etc.

Compression shorts (removed)

Compression-short requirements were removed and rule 3-5-7 was deleted. See editorial changes for more.

Editorial changes

The rules committee made the following editorial changes.

Brace (3-5-3 Note). A definition of a brace was changed to keep up with modern advancements in accepted items used as a brace.

Free-throw violations (9-1 Pen. 4b). When a second violation occurs by the free thrower or a teammate behind the free-throw line extended and the three-point line, both violations should be penalized.

Compression shorts (3-5-3b and c). The change removes the contradiction in the rules about tights being interpreted as illegal. Now headbands, wristbands, arm sleeves, knee sleeves, lower-leg sleeves, tights and compression shorts all fall under the same restrictions. ☒

Around-the-Horn Mechanics

Confusion can occur at the end of a period because of how an official signals. For example, A1 attempts a shot at the end of a period and (a) the horn sounds while the ball is in the air, or (b) the horn sounds prior to A1's release of the ball. What is the proper sequence of the signals?

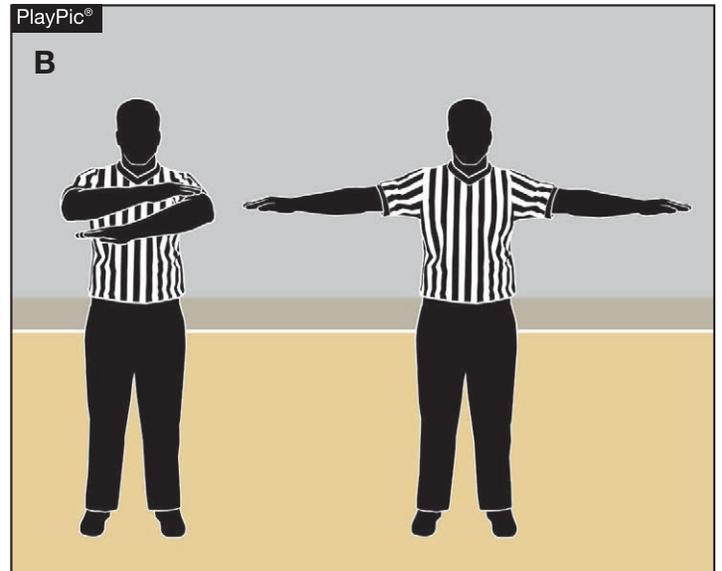
Situation A. This is a legal try. If the basket is successful, give a signal to count the goal for two or three points. In this situation confusion can occur. Some officials, after scoring the goal, might improvise an end-of-period signal as in PlayPic A or B.

Two reasons this should not happen: First, PlayPic A is not an approved signal and PlayPic B is the signal for cancelling a score. Second, using either unapproved end-of-period signal could be misinterpreted as the wave-off signal indicating that the goal should not count. The proper procedure is to let your successful-goal signal mark the end of the period.

Situation B. The second you decide the try will not count, sound your whistle and begin to wave off the basket, as in PlayPic B. Doing so serves two purposes: First, it

communicates that the basket will not be successful regardless of if it goes in and, second, it indicates the period is over and teams may depart the floor. There will be no free throws or activities to follow.

No shot. The easiest situation occurs when no shot is taken. The horn sounds and everyone wanders off the court. All is well. After the horn, sound your whistle to indicate the end of the period. Waiting for the horn is helpful in that situation since there is no close buzzer-beating decision and it alerts the teams that they can depart. ☒





Second (Clock) Nature

The first thing most of us do in the morning is look at our alarm clock, watch or phone. When we look at our phone, we usually observe the time. When we get in our cars, we observe the car clock. When we are in a boring social situation, we tend to look at our watch or phone. Clock awareness as a basketball official can make us or burn us.

Knowing clock scenarios is an intangible of proper officiating. It is a sign of awareness and being detailed, which is a plus with players, fans, administrators and coaches. It shows that you care about the game.

You have to know when the clock starts and stops. Also, you must remember that clock start and stop has nothing to do with the ball live and dead.

Basic principles. On a jump ball, the game clock starts when the ball is legally touched, but the shot clock starts when a team gains control of the ball. During a throw-in, the game clock and the shot clock start when the ball is legally touched by a player inbounds. On a missed free throw and the ball is to remain live, the game clock shall start when the ball is legally touched by a player on the floor. The shot clock starts when a player gains control of the missed free throw.

When does the game clock stop? The game clock stops when the official signals a foul, held ball, violation or timeout. The game clock stops when an official stops the game for an injury. The game clock also stops when the crew confers with the scorer or timer when there is a management situation.

The practical part about the rule is awareness. When an official stops the clock with a signal, he or she must always glance at the game clock and shot clock to know they have properly stopped. The same is true when an official is "chopping" the ball in on a throw-in, jump ball and missed free throw when there is a rebound involved. In that situation, you are making sure the clock and the game clock are properly started.

How do you learn clock awareness? When going from trail to lead, find the game clock and the shot clock. That is also true when going from center to center and from lead to trail. That

establishes a good habit of finding the clocks, which is great for awareness skills. When rotating in the lead position, take a peek at the shot clock and game clock at the far end of the floor. The clocks are in front of you as the center and trail in a rotation.

Know the differentials between the game clock and the shot clock. For example, if the game clock is at 19:25, you could possibly have a shot-clock violation at 18:55. If the shot clock is improperly reset and you know the difference, do the math and correct the shot clock. That is true in games where there are usually no monitors. The crew is often accepted very positively when it shows it is in the game and has awareness.

In games without a shot clock, it helps to know the game time to aid in your credibility when questioned about a 10-second count. For example, if you can say, "Coach, the possession started at 4:11 and the clock shows 4:01." You know for certain that 10 seconds has run off.

The game clock, shot clock and 10-second count all start when the ball is legally touched on the floor. If the ball is knocked out of bounds in the backcourt, the 10-second count starts over and the shot-clock number changes. The crew has to remind one another when that occurs. When the shot clock is off, the crew must remind the trail official to use a visible 10-second count.

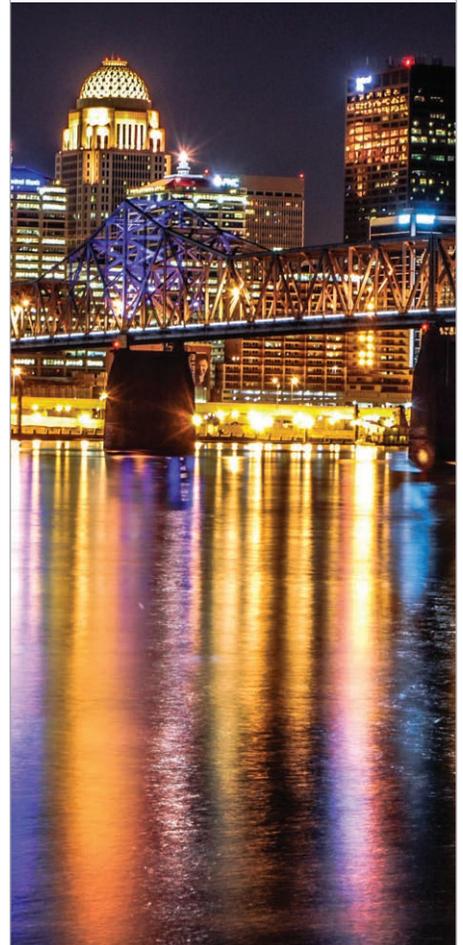
What are the intangibles of that rule? When the shot clock or game clock is winding down, if you have an off-ball foul, make sure the contact is illegal and not incidental. When a try for goal is involved, be aware of the shot getting off in time and the ball striking or grazing the ring.

When you have no monitor and the game clock and shot clock do not start, how can you take time off the clocks? You can always take time off your clocks when you have definite information. Use the 10-second count, five-second throw-in count, five-second closely guarded count and three-second count.

Clock awareness is an acquired skill that can be practiced, and once you achieve it you will get noticed as an official that is a student of the game and has skills welcomed by supervisors and assistants. ☒



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Let's Meet Up

There are times in a game when officials should get together as a crew. There are times when officials should not get together.

During warmups is one of the times officials should avoid getting together, unless necessary. Outside of the captains/coaches meeting, the warmup period is a time for each official to focus on getting ready to officiate the upcoming game.

That is the time to evaluate the teams, ensure proper equipment is worn, correct equipment or court problems and mentally visualize the upcoming events.

Officials should get together as a crew after the first timeout or end of the first quarter if the crew is not on the same page and needs to discuss an issue. If the game is off to a good start as the crew planned, assume your timeout positions as normal.

At the halftime break, the referee can handle addressing the scorer's table while the umpire(s) wait at the center-restraining circle and then join the referee as the crew heads off the floor.

Warmups for the second half are another time each member should individually be preparing much like the pregame warmup period.

Timeouts near the end of a close game should always require an immediate crew

get-together. One official should quickly ensure the needed information (timeouts remaining, team fouls correct as displayed, etc.) from the scorer's table prior to joining the crew. Communicate necessary information needed in terms of timeouts left, the team-foul situation, etc. Talk about the possible strategy situations that may occur based on the game score/situation. If one team is down five points with less than 30 seconds left, it likely will attempt to foul to stop the clock and get the ball back

as quickly as possible. Conversely, if one team is up three with two seconds left, it may choose to foul and put its opponent on the free-throw line, making it harder for the opponent to score three points.

In situations such as an unusual ruling, where the crew has to meet without a timeout or quarter break, send the players to their benches while the crew communicates. That measure allows the crew to address the matter at hand without having to observe the players. ☒



'Coach, We Are Done'

Officials can say, "Coach, we are done" in a conversation without a word.

Create separation and move yourself away from a coach or situation. It is not always ideal for the official to stand right next to a coach during dead-ball situations.

Understand when it is appropriate to speak with a coach and when it is best to give a coach time and distance.

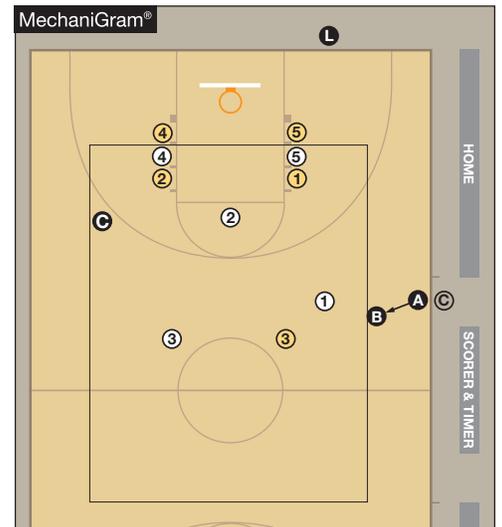
One appropriate time to communicate with a coach may be when they ask a question during a free-throw situation, as shown in the MechaniGram. Answer the question with a concise, to-the-point response. Nothing more, nothing less.

A good rule of thumb for that conversation is that it should be completed prior to the second free throw. That enables you to dedicate attention to the play and not the coach during live-ball action.

In the MechaniGram, the official starts at point A then uses the volleyball line on the court to create space by moving to point B. The use of distance is a great resource to add to your tool belt. Doing so tells the coach that the conversation is over.

What if the official is in a heated conversation with the coach? If you move away, now the coach has to yell or do something drastic that everyone in the gym can hear and see. That makes an issue, like a technical foul, more defensible and clearly sets the tone that, "Coach, we are done." Everyone can see you are not in conversation mode any longer.

Use distance to end conversations and prepare yourself for the next action. There may be times where point B is the starting point because tensions are high. Try moving in to defuse the situation. If that does not work, move out as far as necessary. ☒



The volleyball lines on gym floors are good markers for officials to use when creating separation from a coach in a heated situation.

The Eavesdropper

Officials need to be aware of what is going on in their surroundings. Heightened awareness is needed during the dead-ball periods when players are wandering around on the court.

The 2014 NBA Eastern Conference finals between the Miami Heat and Indiana Pacers presented such a situation. Then-Pacers guard Lance Stephenson, during a dead-ball period, went to stand next to Miami Coach Erik Spoelstra while Spoelstra was talking with two of his players near the sideline and 28-foot mark.

By rule, there is no restriction for Stephenson to be there. But his presence there was likely not by accident.

Officials should have heightened awareness to those situations. Someone at some point will probably take exception.

Officials need to be proactive. Provide your presence in those areas quickly and make sure that you do not lose track of the players and coaches. The example is certainly a situation in which you want at least one official focused on the area.

Other times players may attempt to

enter a team's huddle are during free-throw situations and after timeouts when one team has broken its huddle prior to the second horn/end of timeout.

Be proactive in heading off any potential flashpoints that might occur. In those situations, it is good to resume play as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Discuss that in your pregames, along

with situations in which you might want to alert your partner to resume play. An example would be giving a visual and verbal cue to a partner to end a conversation with a coach or player and move to the starting position to resume play.

The whole crew needs to work to be ready to resume play prior to the administering official starting play. 📺



Free-Throw Free-for-all



Rough play on free throws is inevitable, right? It should not be. Rebounding is about positioning, anticipation and effort — not a battle of who is stronger. Keep your focus on the players, not the ball.

1 If hands and arms of the player are at shoulder width or above, the player probably intends to legitimately contend for the miss. If not, he or she might be more interested in displacing, locking or grabbing. Make a note of it.

2 Watch for the defense and inside defender to lock arms and lock up the teammate of the free-thrower in the second position. The player may turn and box out but displacement is key in judging positioning.

3 Watch for smaller players in positions farthest from the basket to grab, clutch or hold. Allowing such grabbing can inevitably lead to rougher play.

4 Make sure the player in the second position has a legitimate opportunity to play in his or her vertical space. Many times, the defenders will try to pinch in and displace the player, eliminating his or her chance to jump and obtain the rebound.





Consistency = Similar Plays, Same Rulings

There are many qualities expected of officials, none more than consistency in rulings. Lack of consistency is the most common criticism directed at officials.

When you think of consistency in officiating, it is the evenness with which officials make decisions regardless of game situations and other external pressures. Players and coaches expect officials to be consistent, not only individually, but as a team. Their rulings should be identical, and they should apply the rules equally to both teams. Maintaining consistency throughout a game is tied to having a thorough knowledge of the rules.

Good rules knowledge can serve as a guide for determining the legality of a play. Sound judgment gained through that knowledge and game experience will allow the official to meet the demands of all situations. It is important to pay attention to that aspect of the game and to stay the course on consistent rulings, regardless of any obstacles or criticism received.

How often have you heard or said in a pregame conference, "Let's make sure we are consistent"? A major component of every pregame conference must include a discussion on ruling consistency.

Consistency can be an elusive element and should be applied from the opening tipoff. The crew needs to clearly establish that the game will be within the rules, and then maintain consistency throughout the game. Each official needs to maintain consistent rulings from one to the other. An appearance of adopting the same officiating style should be apparent between partners. Understandably, not all equivalent situations can be ruled upon the same. Each situation can differ and a ruling should be based on its effect on the individual play. But applying the rules correctly for each and every play breeds consistency.

The goal for the crew is to make rulings based on an unbiased, honest manner, by the rules regardless of all sources of influence. By staying the course and applying the rules correctly, the crew builds credibility with players and coaches. Discipline as a partner aids in an official's ability to make the right decisions at the right time and to maintain the respect and acceptance of all throughout the game.

Your role as a responsible partner develops discipline, discipline develops consistency and consistency develops correct habits. Control of the game is the product of good consistency. A game

goes out of control when participants lose respect for the rules of the game.

Inconsistency becomes the target for criticism. When that happens players are guessing what is allowed and what is not. Coaches' trust in the officials diminishes. When that happens, never try to "even it up." That would in essence punish a team for previous inconsistent rulings.

Competent, consistent officials have confidence in their abilities to control the game. Consistent officials remain in control during any and all adversity.

Officiating teaches us about being a part of a team, the importance of working together to accomplish a common goal of managing the game within the boundaries of fair play and the rules. We learn to shoulder responsibility, and how to cope with success and failure. It teaches how to

remain focused on a task and learn how to ensure greater accuracy and fairness in our performance.

To become a good official requires a lot of hard work, dedication and practice. We learn about consistency and concentration and how to overcome our weaknesses, and go beyond our limits. You are able to see and feel the results.

Learning the art of officiating is challenging, but practicing it is more challenging. Consistency will enable you to exhibit a sureness and decisiveness in every decision, which portrays good positive decision-making. Those who continue to study the rules and apply their experience exercise good judgment.

Make rulings on similar actions in the first two minutes the same as in the last two minutes of the game. 📌

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Sell Your Next Out-of-Bounds Play

An out-of-bounds ruling can be a simple one to make, but that is not always the case. In fact, it may be one of the most difficult decisions to make during a game.

For most, the start of an out-of-bounds ruling is the stop-clock mechanic, as shown on the left in the PlayPic.

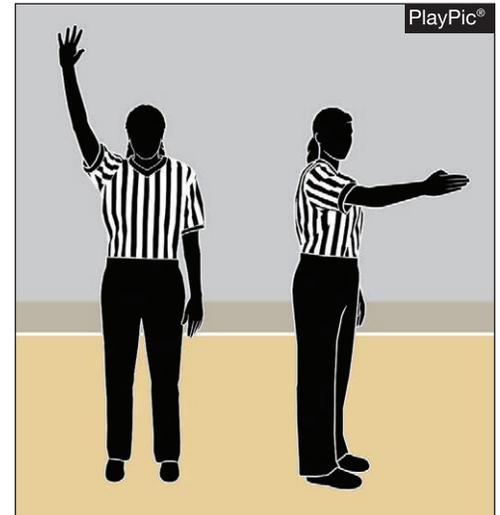
The next step involves giving the proper direction in which play should resume, as shown on the right in the PlayPic. Often you might know the color of the team first. Use your voice to demonstrate strength by giving the color but take a second, if there is doubt, to make sure you know which way that team is going first.

Again, point in the correct direction first. If the play needs additional information or something more to sell the ruling — for example, pointing at who last touched the ball or where the

player stepped out-of-bounds — do that only after you have given the direction. When you say, “Off white, blue ball!” or you point at a player to indicate it went off him or her, and then signal in the other team’s direction, it can be confusing. That happens because people see or hear only your first action. Pointing at the line to indicate the player stepped out is not always needed. Give the direction first. It usually is more than enough information for the players.

A final way to lend more credibility with out-of-bounds decisions is to verbalize the team’s exact color. When a team wears a purple jersey and we refer to it as blue, it is just another reason for players, coaches and fans to question our common sense. Everyone in the gym sees that the color is purple (orange, gold, etc.). Officials look out of place as the only ones to call a team by the wrong color.

Get a challenging out-of-bounds decision right by stopping the clock and pointing in the proper direction before announcing the appropriate color. 📺



Spot-On Timeout Mechanics

Timeouts allow teams to regroup and reset. As officials, where we stand during the timeout period has an effect on the regroup for the teams.

Coaches often use timeouts for strategy reasons, at times asking where play will be resumed. In the MechaniGram, the administering official is in line with the crew even though the ensuing throw-in spot is tableside. That location is correct for the official to stand during the timeout.

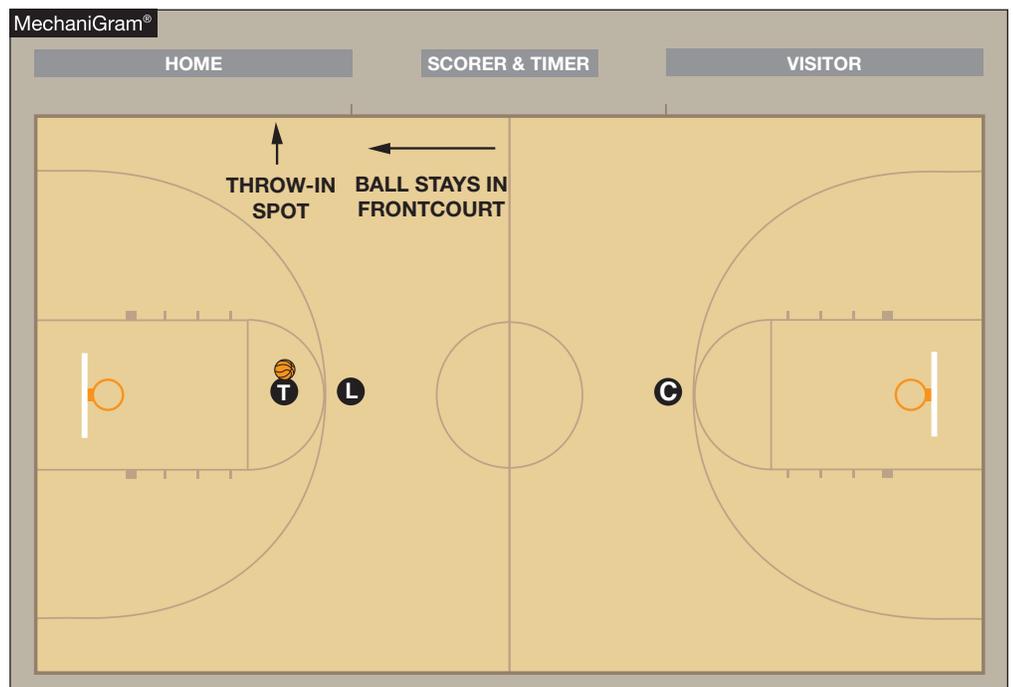
In that position, the official can indicate that the ensuing throw-in will occur at the spot along the sideline. Both teams can see the spot, plus there is no possibility for the official to be shielded by the activity in the timeout area(s).

As the administering official, always stand at or near the throw-in spot to alert teams of the ensuing throw-in location. In two-person mechanics, it is acceptable for the administering official to leave the ball at or near the location, if needed, to help with resuming play or to communicate with a partner. In crew-of-three mechanics, generally an official will be with the ball at the throw-in spot. If the entire crew needs to huddle, such as at the end of the game, one recommendation is to do so where the administering official is standing.

For a throw-in along the endline or the opposite sideline, the administering official stands at the spot of the throw-in. For a throw-in along the tableside sideline, the administering official stands near the spot.

Non-administering official(s) should take a position depending on a 60-second or 30-second timeout.

All officials should resume the position on the floor they had prior to the timeout. 📺





First Things First

Special From CBOA Guest Speaker and NASO Board Member



Debbie Williamson

Coordinator of women's basketball officials for the American Athletic, Atlantic-10 and Big East conferences. She is a former NCAA national coordinator of women's basketball officiating and secretary-rules editor.

Where there is order there is a first, and where there is a first there is a second (or a next). When my children bemoaned that they were called for their third foul (in the second period) and had to sit, my only response was, "You can't get a third without a second and you can't get a second without a first, so fix it (and stop whining about the officials)." Meanwhile, on the officiating side of the foul world, we hear talk of the "first foul."

Sometimes officials say, "First foul" as they go to report a foul after sounding only one whistle. Each time I witness that, my question is always the same: "If you have to tell everyone that this was the first foul, what happened to the second?" The response is usually, "I called the first illegal contact, not the second illegal contact that resulted from the first." My reply to that is, "So, you ignored the second illegal contact?" And the backstroke begins.

According to NCAA women's basketball rules, which I edited and wrote for eight years, simply put, a foul is an infraction of the rules that is charged and penalized. So, if we are qualifying contact as a foul, there is something illegal about it and the appropriate penalty must follow. And if the second response to the question is that the second contact was not illegal, then there is no second foul and therefore no need to qualify that the only contact being penalized is the "first." Instead of vocalizing "first foul," use the approved mechanics. When we see illegal contact, we blow the whistle and raise a fist, then properly report the foul. If questioned by the coach about any sequential contact, we have a brief conversation about what is legal and illegal. First things first.

In the locker room (in private), a crew often will encourage each other to get the "first foul" and for good reason. In one of my first collegiate women's games, I waited with bated breath for the pregame

wisdom to come from the veteran referee. After all, if he was the referee, he must know it all, even if it was a non-conference Division II game in October. After what seemed like hours, his wisdom poured out in a simple sentence, "If you make a woman mad, at some point she will get you back, so get the first foul and be ready for the second." Off we went into the land of revenge.

We can debate all day whether or not that is wisdom, but we cannot deny that when we do not penalize the first illegal contact, players determine that they can and they will and they do. That is the very thing we are trying to avoid when we admonish each other to get the first foul. The critical piece becomes the ability to distinguish the incidental contact from the first illegal contact so that we correctly

call what is actually the first foul. First things first.

Things happen and often quickly. "When 10 players move rapidly in a limited area, some contact is certain to occur" (NFHS 4-27-1). The practical language from our rulebook is followed by a fundamental truth on that topic of "first foul." That is, "incidental contact shall be contact with an opponent that is permitted and does not constitute a foul." And the coup de grace begins that rule when it states, "All contact shall not constitute a foul." So, what makes the first foul a foul? To know what a foul is we must determine what it is not.

We find the answer to what is foul in the definition of what a foul is not when

+ See "First Things First" p.12

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+ First Things First continued from p. 11

we define incidental contact. "Contact that results when opponents are in equally favorable positions to perform normal defensive or offensive movement, should be permitted even though the contact may be severe or excessive" (NFHS 4-27-2). Further, "contact that does not hinder the opponent from participating in normal defensive or offensive movements shall be considered incidental" (NFHS 4-27-3). The rules are clear. Contact is permitted, even in a girls' game. Critical to officiating at a high level is knowing how to differentiate between incidental (legal) and illegal contact because anyone can put a whistle on any kind of contact, and some do.

That is not the same as an official's opinion of whether an advantage or

disadvantage was gained from the said contact and instead whether a player's movement was hindered and that player was kept from being able to perform the normal movement because of that contact. The different philosophies of what one deems as an advantage or a disadvantage often run the gamut along a continuum that includes time and score with neither being mentioned in rule 10-1 on what is legal or illegal when it comes to contact. Let's stick to the rule. First things first.

Can it be as simple as putting a whistle on contact that hinders when that contact occurs? Real-time officiating can be challenging when our whistles are delayed on a foul and play continues and develops into something much worse. Is it possible that when we enforce the first illegal contact that we are rescuing ourselves

from the subsequent disasters that are bound to occur when we wait? Let's not confuse a "patient whistle" with a decision to wait on the first illegal contact. Let's be efficient at determining the difference between incidental and illegal so that we get fouls when they first occur.

Rule 10-1 is full of illegal contact, using all kinds of body parts, and thus defining what is a foul. In all 17 articles defining a personal foul, there is no mention of a first foul because it either is or it ain't. And one thing is certain, ugly ain't always illegal. Recognizing a foul when it occurs and having the ability to put a whistle on it, and doing that consistently and accurately, are what the best in our business do. And the best do it one at a time taking care of first things first, then doing it again and again. ☒



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Conform to Tuck Rule

It is difficult to put a finger on an awkward mechanic. Yet you see it at all levels. It is not specific to men or women, young or old nor talent pools. Some folks question if the meaning is one, two, 11, 30-something, bonus, love for the Texas Longhorns or sign language for love.

Urban dictionary defines one variation of the hand signal as "hang loose," "hello" or "wassup?"

Call it "referee pinky." Whether it is innate or learned subconsciously, many officials out there, for whatever reason, allow their pinky finger, and sometimes thumb, to flap in the wind when signaling

for one shot or the number one or pointing.

It presents confusion for scorers, partners, coaches, players and fans. Imagine the scorer seeing the upper left photo and wondering: Is that a one or 11? Some officials use their misaligned digits on shooting fouls causing partner(s) to wonder: Is it one shot or two? In some places the signal specifically means bonus.

If you are guilty of allowing your pinky finger or thumb — or both — to confuse others, concentrate on tucking them into your hand.

Referee pinky no more. ☒

