



NFHS BASKETBALL 2009-10 POINTS OF EMPHASIS

1. TRAVELING. The traveling rule has not changed; however, the committee is still concerned that the rule is not being properly enforced. Consequently, offensive players are gaining a tremendous advantage. Areas of specific concern are: the spin move, the step-through move, the jump stop, perimeter shooters taking an extra “hop” prior to releasing the try and ball handlers lifting the pivot foot prior to releasing the ball on the dribble. The key to determining the legality of those moves is to first find the pivot foot. Then, if the player moves a foot or the feet in any direction in excess of prescribed limits, a traveling violation has occurred. Officials must know the rule, find the pivot foot and improve call accuracy; coaches must demand that players execute this skill properly, especially in practice; players must continue to develop this basic skill and practice performing legal moves.

Guidelines for Teaching and Officiating

- A. Determine the pivot foot immediately.
- B. At the start of the dribble, the ball must be released before the pivot foot is lifted.
- C. After the dribble has ended, the player may lift pivot foot, but must release the ball on a pass or shot before the pivot foot returns to floor.
- D. A player may never take two steps while in possession of the ball.

2. CLOSELY GUARDED. Well-officiated, closely-guarded situations provide for better balance between offense and defense. When the closely-guarded rules are not followed, there is a significant advantage for the offense. The following areas are to be emphasized:

- A. **Rule basics.** A closely-guarded situation occurs when a player in control of the ball in his or her team’s frontcourt, is guarded by an opponent who is within 6 feet of the player who is holding or dribbling the ball; the defensive player must obtain a legal guarding position. A player shall not hold the ball for five seconds or dribble the ball for five seconds while closely guarded in his or her frontcourt. A player can legally hold the ball while closely guarded for four seconds, dribble the ball for four seconds and hold the ball again for four seconds before violating.
- B. **Measuring 6 feet.** Officials must define and have a clear image of the 6-foot guarding distance necessary. Too frequently, officials require the defensive player to be within 3 to 4 feet prior to the count being initiated. Good visual examples of this distance can be found on the court as: the distance between the free-throw line and the top of the semi-circle; from the division line to the

jump circle; two adjacent marked lane spaces. Failure to properly judge the 6-foot distance and require the defender to be within 3 or 4 feet of the dribbler before beginning the count puts the defensive player in an unfair position.

- C. **Ending the count.** A closely-guarded count ends when no defensive player is within 6 feet. The count also stops when a closely guarded player: completes a dribble anywhere in the team's own frontcourt; starts a dribble in the team's own frontcourt and ends it anywhere in the frontcourt (a new five-second count will start if the player holds the ball); loses possession of the ball for any reason in the team's own frontcourt; or has his or her dribble interrupted. If a closely-guarded player beats the defender(s) by getting head and shoulders past the defensive player, the count has ended.
- D. **Multiple defenders.** The count should continue even if there is a defensive switch, provided the 6-foot distance is maintained. There is no requirement for the defensive player to remain the same during the count as long as the offensive player is closely guarded throughout.
- E. **Counting mechanics.** The official begins a visible count when the 6-foot distance is established and must switch arms when going directly from one counting situation to another.

3. THREE-SECONDS. When a team is in control of the ball in its frontcourt, a player of that team may not remain in the lane for three seconds. The lane is bounded by the end line and the farther edge of the free-throw line – and includes the lane lines.

- A. **Team control.** In order to understand the administration of the rule, it is necessary to know when team control exists. Team control exists: during player control, holding and dribbling inbounds; during a pass between teammates; during an interrupted dribble. Team control continues until: the ball is in flight during a try for goal; an opponent secures control; the ball becomes dead. Team control does not exist during the tapping of a rebound or when the ball is loose following a try. There is no team control during a throw-in. The three-second restriction is not in effect when there is no team control, and is terminated the instant team control ends.
- B. **Exception.** Allowance is made and the count is momentarily stopped when a restricted player has the ball and dribbles or makes a move to try for goal. However, the previous count is resumed if the player does not continue and try for goal. Some may feel that exception complicates the rule, but it is necessary in order to balance the offense and defense. The most obvious misinterpretation of this rule is when the restricted player has a two-second count when he or she begins the move to try for goal, but is stopped or the ball is batted loose. The player involved, while in the lane, attempts to regain possession and instead of continuing the count, the official erroneously stops it entirely. If the player starts a move to the basket and the ball is jarred loose, the previous count is resumed and results in a violation if it reaches three seconds. The purpose of the rule is circumvented if a violation is not called when this occurs.
- C. **Screeener.** Another situation that is occurring more frequently, and which is often not properly called, is when an offensive player sets a screen in the lane

and remains there for more than three seconds. The responsible official must make sure that offensive players are not occupying restricted positions for more than the permitted time. The offensive player gains an unwarranted advantage if he or she can “camp out” in the lane, either as a potential shooter or as a screener.

D. **Rough post play.** When the three-second rule is properly enforced, rough post play is likely reduced. Post defenders cannot be expected to defend and deny an opponent in the lane indefinitely. When an offensive post player “camps out” in the lane, defenders tend to get frustrated and become more physical. Calling this infraction when it occurs goes a long way to decreasing rough post play – an area that has been emphasized for many years.

4. BLOCK/CHARGE. The obtaining and maintaining of a legal guarding position on a person with and without the ball has been a point of emphasis over the years, but yet, remains one of the most difficult plays to coach and officiate.

A. **The basics.** To correctly understand the guarding rule, the following points are critical:

- 1) To obtain an initial guarding position on a player with the ball, the defender must get to the spot first without contact, have both feet touching the floor, and initially face the opponent.
- 2) Once the initial guarding position has been obtained, the defender may move laterally or at an angle or backwards in order to maintain a legal guarding position. Keep in mind that when a defender obtains an initial position with both feet touching the floor and facing his/her opponent, the defender need not be stationary but may continue to move in order to stay in front of the person with the ball.
- 3) Once the defender obtains a legal guarding position, the defender may raise his/her hands in a normal stance or may jump vertically within his/her vertical plane.
- 4) A defender may turn or duck to absorb the shock of imminent contact.
- 5) A player is never permitted to move into the path of an opponent after the opponent has jumped into the air.
- 6) A player who extends an arm, shoulder, hip or leg into the path of an opponent and causes contact is not considered to be in a legal guarding position.

B. **Guarding a player *with* the ball.** Points to remember when a defender is guarding a player with the ball:

- 1) Time and distance are of no consequence. If the defender gets to the spot first and is in a legal guarding position, the onus is on the person with the ball.
- 2) A defender is never permitted to move into an opponent and thus cause contact.
- 3) If a player with the ball gets his/her shoulders past the front of the torso of the defender and contact occurs, the defender has blocked and a foul must

be called. In order for the defender to re-obtain a legal guarding position, all "guarding a person with the ball" criteria must be met.

- 4) When an offensive player receives a long pass with his/her back turned and places one foot on the floor and crashes into a legally set defender, it is a player-control foul. It seems many officials are calling this a traveling violation, which is incorrect.

- C. **Guarding a player *without* the ball.** Time and distance are the key factors. The distance allowed depends on the speed in which the offensive player is moving, with the distance never to exceed two strides, regardless of how fast he or she is moving. Once the defender has met the criteria of both feet touching the court and initially facing the opponent, the defender has obtained a legal guarding position and may move the same as if he/she were guarding a player *with* the ball.

5. FREE-THROW ADMINISTRATION. Over the years, NFHS rules committees have been concerned with an increase in rough play during free throws. There have been several rules changes and Points of Emphasis during this time to address these concerns. Last year, a change was made to move all players up one lane space, leaving the two lane spaces closest to the end line vacant. The change attempted to reduce rough play during free-throw situations, while maintaining acceptable defensive rebounding percentages. The following areas are still of concern and are being emphasized:

- A. **Lane-space requirements.** The first marked lane spaces on each side of the lane, above and adjacent to the neutral-zone marks, shall be occupied by opponents of the free thrower. No teammate of the free thrower shall occupy either of these marked lane spaces. If the offense desires the second spaces, it may have them. If the defense desires the third spaces, it may have them. If a player entitled to the second or third space does not occupy that space, an opponent may be in the space (within the number limitations, four defense and two offense). All officials are responsible for ensuring players are in their proper spaces. The administering official (Lead) should check each space for proper alignment before bouncing the ball to the shooter. If these requirements are not met, see 9-1-9 Penalty.
- B. **Rough Play.** Coaches must not teach players to "lock up" arms along the lane line, nor drive players farther under the basket with brute force. Offensive players in the second position must not be permitted to displace or push the defensive player in the first lane position. In addition, defensive players in the last position should not be permitted to displace the free-throw shooter. Fouls must be called for illegal contact and displacement on free throws, just as they would be for illegal rebounding activity off of any try.
- C. **Disconcertion.** With the space closest to the shooter now occupied, disconcertion is a concern. Of particular concern is when the free throw will become dead (first of two or first two of three). Defensive players often employ tactics which serve no other purpose than to disconcert the shooter during free

throws (“boxing out” the free thrower off the free-throw line, waving arms, yelling instructions to teammates, etc.)

- D. **Other violations.** Players are attempting to gain a rebounding advantage by violating the free-throw restrictions and entering the lane early. No player shall enter, leave or touch the court outside the marked lane space (3 feet by 3 feet). Officials must review and enforce the rules regarding offensive and defensive free-throw violations.
- E. **Officials’ Positions.** Officials must be positioned appropriately to administer free-throw situations properly. In a crew of three, the Lead official should be approximately 4 feet to the nearer lane line and well off the end line for all free throws. The center should be halfway between the nearer free-throw lane and the sideline, at approximately the free-throw line extended – a step up or down to get the best angle to observe the opposite two top spaces and the free throw shooter. The Trail official should be at approximately the 28-foot mark and just inside the tableside boundary line – not at or near the division line!

COMMENTS ON THE 2009-10 RULES REVISIONS

REPLAY PERMITTED AT THE CONCLUSION OF STATE CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES CONTESTS (2-2-1 NOTE): A state association may now permit game or replay officials to utilize available replay equipment to determine the outcome of a state championship series game. When a try for goal occurs at the expiration of time in the fourth quarter or any overtime period (0:00 on the game clock), replay equipment may be used to determine if the try should be counted, and if so, if it was a two- or a three-point goal. Individual state associations will determine if the equipment will be used, at what tournament round(s) and by whom. This same technology is already being utilized after state contests by the media and being showcased on the Internet. State administrators should also be permitted to use this same technology, if available and desired, to assist in making the correct call when the outcome of the game hangs in the balance and a team has no further opportunities to overcome a critical error.

RED/LED LIGHT PERMITTED TO END QUARTER/EXTRA PERIOD (1-14; 5-6-2): When a red light behind the backboard or an LED light on the backboard is present, it is permitted to signal the expiration of time in the quarter or extra period. If no red/LED light is present, the audible timer’s signal will continue to signal the expiration of time. The change permits equipment currently found in some facilities to be utilized rather than ignored. All other end-of-period rules remain intact. During their pregame responsibilities, game officials should determine if red/LED lights are present in order to adjudicate end-of-period situations properly.