



COMMENTS ON THE 2007-08 BASKETBALL RULES REVISIONS

30-SECOND TIME-OUT WARNING HORN CHANGED (2-12-4, 5-11-2): The warning horn for a 30-second time-out will now be sounded with 15 seconds remaining. With that change, the sounding of all warning horns will be uniform for intermissions, time-outs and the replacement interval for a disqualified/injured player.

PLAYER REPLACEMENT INTERVAL REDUCED (2-12-5, 10-5-3): The interval to replace a disqualified or injured player, or a player directed to leave the game, has changed to 20 seconds. A warning horn will be sounded with 15 seconds remaining in the interval (five seconds into the interval). That timeframe was often used as an “unofficial” time-out. By reducing the replacement interval and sounding the warning horn after five seconds, coaches are encouraged to replace the player in a more timely fashion.

WHEN A DRIBBLE ENDS CLARIFIED (4-15-4d, 9-5-2): The definition of when a dribble ends was changed to when the loss of control by the dribbler is caused by the opponent touching, or being touched by, the ball rather than an intentional batting of the ball. The illegal dribble violation was also edited to reflect this rules change. The rules were changed because a long-standing interpretation had been that any touching of a dribble by a defender (intentional or otherwise, by the hand or otherwise) ends the dribble. The way the rule was previously written implied that the touching must be by the hand and must be intentional. The new rule is now consistent with that long-standing interpretation and current enforcement.

4.15.4 SITUATION: While A1 is dribbling in A’s backcourt, the ball legally touches B1’s leg, causing it to bounce away from A1. A1 quickly recovers the ball with two hands and then starts another dribble. **RULING:** Legal. The touch by B1 ended the original dribble and A1 could then recover and dribble again. However, the touch by B1 did not end team control and the 10-second backcourt count continues. (9-5-2)

WHEN A THROW-IN ENDS CLARIFIED (4-42-5): The word “legally” was added to the definition of when a throw-in ends. It now states, “The throw-in ends when the passed ball touches, or is *legally* touched by, another player who is either inbounds or out of bounds.” The previous rule could possibly reward a defensive team for committing a violation, especially during an alternating-possession throw-in.

4.42.5 SITUATION: Team A is awarded an alternating-possession throw-in. A1's throw-in pass is illegally kicked by B2. **RULING:** As a result of B2's kicking violation, Team A is awarded a throw-in at the designated spot nearest to where the violation occurred. Since the throw-in was not contacted "legally," the throw-in had not ended. Therefore, the arrow remains with Team A for the next alternating-possession throw-in. (6-4-4)

NOT-CLOSELY-GUARDED SIGNAL ADDED (Signal Chart): A new signal (spreading of the arms) was added to the signal chart to communicate that a defender is not in a closely-guarded situation. The new signal clearly communicates that the official is aware that the defender is attempting to obtain a closely-guarded count, but has not met the six-foot distance requirement or that the six-foot distance necessary for continuing the count has been broken. It is intended to be used as a means of communication and does not need to be used in obvious situations, such as when an offensive player speeds past a defender or when there is significant distance between the player with the ball and the defender.

2007-08 BASKETBALL POINTS OF EMPHASIS

1. UNIFORMS. The NFHS has received an increasing number of questions regarding the legality of basketball uniforms. It appears more and more schools are ordering and wearing illegal uniforms. To address that issue, uniforms are once again a point of emphasis.

A. Home White Required. This season, the new rule requiring the home team to wear white jerseys, takes effect. The rules change was passed in April of 2004; providing programs four years to comply with the rule. The visiting team is required to wear dark jerseys.

B. Legal Jersey Styles/Designs. Uniform jerseys must comply with the rules listed in 3-4, 3-5 and 3-6. The rules are concise and clear regarding what is, and what is not, permissible on the jersey. A document was created to graphically illustrate proper uniform design. That document and an animated presentation can be found on the NFHS website. Coaches and school administrators must ensure that legal uniforms are being ordered and purchased from manufacturers/distributors.

C. Enforcement of Illegal Jerseys. NFHS Rule 10-3-2 states that a player shall not wear an illegal jersey, illegal pants/skirt or an illegal number. The penalty shall be a technical foul for each starter or substitute that enters the game with the illegal item. A special report form should be filed with the state association when that occurs.

D. Uniforms Worn Properly. Team members may not participate if the uniform is not worn properly with the jersey tucked in and the pants/skirt above the hips. Team members are also prohibited from playing if wearing items such as jewelry, illegal undershirts or undergarments that extend below the pants/skirt. Players in violation of those rules may not enter or shall be directed to leave the game. Coaches bear a great responsibility in

ensuring uniforms are properly worn and officials must enforce the rule as written.

2. FREE THROWS. The NFHS Basketball Rules Committee continues to be concerned about activities surrounding free throws, especially rough play.

A. Rough play. Keeping the block between the players continues to serve its initial purpose. The same is true for player restrictions ending when the attempt hits the ring. Coaches must not teach players to “lock up” arms along the lane line, nor drive players further 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.

B. Lane Positioning. There has been much debate on what – if anything – to do with lane positioning on free throws. Some want rules that would move players up on the low block or even eliminate the first-lane space. The belief is that the players underneath the basket are at a rebounding disadvantage. Data collected from a variety of sources does not support that belief.

Multiple studies show players in the first marked lane space garner approximately 75-80 percent of all free-throw rebounds. That is a range the rules committee finds acceptable and is consistent with historical norms. The team closest to the basket is supposed to get most of the rebounds, not be guaranteed a rebound. The rules in that case are also not designed to give each team an equal chance at securing a rebound.

C. Violations. Players are attempting to gain a rebounding advantage by violating the free-throw restrictions and entering the lane early. Officials must review and enforce the rules regarding offensive and defensive free-throw violations.

3. DISPLACEMENT. Displacement is a foul and must be called. The committee is concerned about two specific areas where displacement continues to occur without the appropriate fouls being assessed.

A. Post Play. The offense may “shape up” to receive a pass or to force the defense to deploy or assume a legal guarding position at the side, in front or behind the offensive post player. When the offensive player then uses the “swim stroke,” pushes, pins, elbows, forearms, holds, clears with the body, or just generally demonstrates rough physical movements or tactics, that is a foul on the offensive player and must be called without warning. The defense can assume a legal, vertical stance or position on the side, front or behind the offensive post player. When the defense undercuts (initiates lower-body non-vertical contact), slaps, pushes, holds, elbows, forearms or just generally demonstrates rough, physical movements or tactics, that is a foul on the defense and must be called without warning.

When a player dislodges an opponent from an established position by pushing or "backing in", it is a foul.

B. Screening. A legal screener must be stationary prior to contact within his/her vertical plane (hands, arms, legs and feet no more than shoulder width apart). When these two requirements are not met, and when there is sufficient contact delivered by the screener to bump, slow or displace, it is a foul on the screener. When a screen is blind, outside the visual field or a rear screen, it is only legal when the screened player is permitted a normal step backward. The screened player must then make a legitimate attempt to get around a legal screen without forcing rough or "displacing" contact. This type of contact must result in a foul on the screened player. When a screener is illegally moving in an attempt to set a screen, but no contact occurs with the opponent, no foul has been committed.

4. BALL HANDLER/DRIBBLER. The committee felt that several areas pertaining to the ball handler/dribbler needed to be addressed.

A. Traveling. The traveling rule has not changed; however the rule is not being properly enforced. Consequently, offensive players are gaining a tremendous advantage. Areas of specific concern are: the spin move by post players, the step-through move by post players, rebounders repositioning for put-backs, the jump stop, perimeter shooters taking an extra "hop" and ball handlers lifting the pivot foot before 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 challenge themselves to improve their accuracy in this area; the players' skills will then improve as a result.

B. Palming. Offensive players "palming" the ball continue to gain a tremendous advantage over defensive players. Emphasis is not only to be given to the dribbler's hand position, but also the activity of the ball while the dribble is occurring. "Palming" not only occurs while the palm is facing "skyward," but can also occur while the palm is facing the floor. The key to officiating this play consistently and correctly is to determine if the ball has "come to rest." A definite advantage to the offensive player is gained on the hesitation "move" to beat a defender (toward the basket or just to go by them). In many of those instances, the ball is "coming to rest" in the dribbler's hand. A violation must be called by the official, as there is no way to legally defend against this move.