



## 2023-24 Basketball Newsletter # 3

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### **FOCUS AREAS AND OBSERVATIONS**

- Suggested arrival to game site is an hour before game time. That gives you time to have a good pregame with your crew.
- Arrive on the court 15 minutes prior to game time. Check for uniform violations, jewelry, etc.
- There have already been several dunks in the pregame warm-ups. Know how to adjudicate the rule. There have been 3 called this season. Case book page 84 (10.5.1) Situation E.
- The sub-varsity game is just as important to those players, coaches, and parents as the varsity ones are for those players, coaches, and parents.
- As officials working sub-varsity game, let's get those uniforms worn the way the manufacturer intended them to be worn. Check with the table before the game just as you would for the varsity game to make sure we are all on the same page.
- Visibly counting players coming on the floor (Starters, 2+ Subs, & Time Outs). The thumbs up, eye contact, or pointing is just not good enough. A quick visible count, every time will prevent a mistake.
- Pointing at an arc when the shooter's toe is touching. This immediately reinforces in your own mind that you have a confident decision, it helps communicate to coaches, the table, and fans.
- Identifying the shooter eliminates confusion, helps coaches, helps the table, helps the player, and most of all helps the crew. There truly is nothing more embarrassing than making a call and not knowing who it is on. Onus is just as much on the off, non-calling officials for getting the right shooter.
- Reaffirming direction and spot, after reporting and starting the clock for a time out. Let's admit it, this is a very long dead ball, that's why we even blow our whistle to administer a throw in, but it is also the most dangerous time for us to make a mistake. Reaffirming to the official at the spot eliminates making this mistake.
- Talking a technical foul(s) all the way through to the spot and direction of the throw-in allows for time to "appropriately" rotate the crew while keep eyes on players, confirming unsporting acts or the location for point of interruption, and most importantly add calm the situation. It is not just about quickly getting it "behind" you.
- Verbally and physically communicate color and number to your crew on who a free thrower is going to before leaving toward a time out or will be when returning after a time out.
- A trail with a 10 count needs to follow action leaving the sideline away from them and taking a few steps on the court provides for better angles of seeing through players.
- Run the floor with your head turned and eyes on players. You cannot see players when your head/eyes are focused on the wall or the of the gym/arena.



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- Do not lean, no matter what. Leaning simply means you should have moved your feet. Tall and poised screams competence and confidence and will increase percentages of seeing the play better to make a correct judgement, call, or no-call.
- Talking to players is appropriate, however know an officials' limitation. A coach may have told a player to do exactly something that you are contradicting. It is okay to inform players verbally as prevention, then make a call if necessary (because it may have been a coaches' strategy or ignorance). Enforce and if necessary, clarify to the coach- take pressure off the player just in case.
- An official's presence is key – let the players know "I AM HERE" without specifically coaching them. This will give a player who is wrong and not necessarily gaining an advantage, the opportunity to correct themselves – if not we have to make the call.
- Finally, here is a math equation: Patience = Flow. There is a high probability that if an inside rebounder comes down with the ball, play on. There is a high probability that if there are thirty jump balls, players are not given enough time to rip. There is a high probability that if there are fifteen "and-ones" officials lack patience. Remember, you know you have arrived when you can point out how patient you are.
- Officials, ask yourself, am I the most fit, the most mobile to perform at the best I can? Only you can provide the honest answer.

### **GUARDS: THEY GIVE OFFICIALS A 'CRASH COURSE'**

It is no secret block/charge situations are one of the hardest plays in basketball to officiate. It certainly is common to have two officials watch the same video clip and each arrive at a different outcome.

Block/charge plays come down to the ability to answer one important question: Who reach the point of contact first? Even though this may be easier said than done, there is a technique that provides a tremendous amount of help in answering it: Referee the defense. But, what does that mean? Why is refereeing the defense important?

Because knowing the legality of a guarding defender's position provides the building block to rigorously evaluating a block/charge play. The place to start this understanding is in Rule 4 under the definition of guarding. "Guarding is the act of legally placing the body in the path of an offensive opponent," and "there is no minimum distance required between the guard and opponent." So, if a defender reaches a spot in the path of an opponent, even mere inches before contact, that defender arrived first. But how do we know if the guard was legal when arriving at the spot? If we read on, the rulebook addresses that, too.

When determining a defender's legality, we first must know how a guard is required to obtain "an initial legal guarding position (LGP)." The rulebook is quite clear and makes it as effortless as possible for officials to understand by listing only two requirements:

- **The guard shall have both feet touching the playing court and inbounds (not touching a boundary).**
- **The guard's torso shall be facing the opponent.**

It really is that simple. There is no provision stating the guard must be stationary or stand between the ball handler and the basket. It does not state the guard must allow the dribbler enough time



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to move out of the way – just two feet on the floor and facing the opponent. In fact, the rules specifically state, “When guarding an opponent with the ball ... no time or distance is required to obtain an initial legal position.” So, whomever gets to the spot of contact first is legal. No mention of requiring one-step to be given, or a half step or even less. A player can get to the spot a fraction of a second before the contact occurs, if the two requirements to obtain an initial LGP are met.

### SEEING IS BELIEVING

We continue to beat the “move with a purpose” drum. A perfect example is the discussion of an officials positioning on the floor and the effort to obtain the best look at a play or matchup. We as officials know exactly what you are talking about when you say you were “stacked” or “straight-lined.”

Say the offensive player were to lose control of the ball after a swipe at the ball by the defender. Clean play with no illegal contact? A foul because she was swiped across the forearm. If the official is straight-lined, the official cannot offer a credible ruling. With 10 players on the floor moving at varying rates of speed and quickness, officials are going to get stacked. It is just a fact of basketball officiating life. The key is to recognize when you are and take a step or two or “position adjust” to create an open look, develop an angle and put yourself in the best position to officiate.

### DON'T SWALLOW THE WHISTLE COME CRUNCH TIME

As officials, we hear all the time from coaches and fans that we need to “let players decide the game.” Some officials have allowed that train of thought to morph into an “anything goes” brand of chaos, especially in the closing moments of a quarter, period, or half, afraid to put air in the whistle and risk influencing the outcome. Instead of fulfilling their responsibility to keep the game safe and fair, they allow these moments to become nothing more than a “survival of the fittest.”

This is problematic on multiple levels. First, and most important, the officials are the guardians of the game. We are the only ones on the floor who do not have a personal stake in the outcome, and as already mentioned, our two primary responsibilities are to keep the game safe and fair. We have been given a rulebook to help us accomplish those means, and those rules do not suddenly go on hiatus just because there is less than a minute remaining and the score is tied.

Second, by deciding not to enforce fouls and violations at certain points of the game, we are doing exactly what coaches and fans do not want us to do — we are influencing the outcome. If an official chooses not to call a clear shooting foul committed against a player launching a possible game-winning three pointer in the final seconds, that official has made the decision that the rules do not matter in that situation. The official has, in effect, decided the game, and that is not what he or she is being paid to do.

If one of them steps on the lane line before the shooter has released a free-throw attempt, **said player has decided** to commit a violation. If one of them commits the foul described in the previous paragraph, **said player has decided** to commit a foul. If one of them spikes the basketball to the floor in frustration and it bounces to the rafters' **said player has decided** to commit a technical foul. If they decide to cause action that is not allowable by the rule, you as the official need to make the call. YOU are not deciding the game, the player has made that choice. It is your job to make the call.

### NOTES FROM THE SDHSAA

1. **Calling for the Cure and Good Samaritan Feet** is scheduled for January 2-16. During this time remember we do make exceptions to the headband and wristband rules. For



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that specific time, pink headbands and wristbands may be worn **WITHOUT** the sleeves being pink. They can wear pink sleeves. However, if sleeves worn were not pink, the sleeves would then need to be black, white, beige or the predominant color of the uniform.

2. **Seven Quarter Rule Form:** Reminder that the Seven-Quarter Rule Form needs to be completed every game in which a preliminary contest is played with the same common opponent, and you have players on the team that play in more than one contest, their participation limit is seven quarters. This form needs to be completed by the scorekeepers from both schools certifying the number of quarters for each contestant who participated in the preliminary game(s). Following completion of this form by **the scorekeeper**, the **head varsity coach from both schools will sign the form attesting to the accuracy of the data completed thereon.**

COACHES, it is your responsibility to review the seven-quarter rule sheet for both teams. Once that form has been signed, you, as coaches have agreed that these are the number of quarters the athletes have played. Should a problem arise or a question come up later pertaining to number of quarters played, the officials will look at the quarter sheet and determine if penalties need to be assessed or not. SCOREKEEPERS need to do their due diligence in making sure they have accurate information listed on the form for coaches to sign, and coaches need to be sure it is accurate BEFORE signing. Once signed that is the information that officials will be used to determine penalties for any violation of quarters played.

3. **Spin Move:** Officials are doing a better job of finding the pivot foot and coaches are doing a better job of teaching what is allowable for a spin move (dribble through or release). Remember, for a spin move to be legal, once the player picks up the dribble and starts to spin, the player must release the ball PRIOR to the pivot foot touching the floor again. If the pivot foot touches the floor a second time PRIOR to the release of the ball, it is a travel.

NFHS rules tools...

[NFHS Basketball Quiz 1: Misunderstood Rules Questions and Answers \(phillyref.com\)](#)  
[Basketball Training Videos – SDHSAA](#)

# HAPPY 2024!!!