Basketball Points of Emphasis - 2020-21

By NFHS on May 21, 2020

basketball

These Points of Emphasis are not in priority order and are considered of equal importance to coaches and officials.

BLOCK/CHARGE

By definition, "a **block or charge** foul" occurs when a defender impedes his/her opponent to stop him/her from going in that direction. If he/she does not obtain a legal defensive position and contact occurs, it is a blocking foul.

The obtaining and maintaining of a legal guarding position on a player 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 initial legal 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 within six feet.

2. Once the initial legal 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 here. 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.

Use of proper signals and the reporting area

One of the most important tenets of good officiating is good communication. The easiest and quickest way for officials to establish credibility is to effectively communicate with players, coaches, spectators, and the scorer's table during a high school basketball game. When officials properly and effectively communicate with all stakeholders during a contest, their judgement is less questioned, their confidence is heightened, and their over-all game management is improved.

Good communication centers on the use of proper signals and mechanics. Signals are verbal and non-verbal means of communication by officials and are required by rule. Each time the whistle is sounded in a basketball game, there is an accompanying signal. Virtually all NFHS Basketball-related publications contain the approved list of signals officials should use. Meanwhile, mechanics are the methods or procedures used by officials while officiating the game that help put the official in the best possible position to provide proper court coverage and to provide effective communication to the table officials.

Officials shall be professional in the use of approved signals and mechanics and should not attempt to draw attention to themselves by the use of unapproved, emphatic, or theatrical signs. Adherence to

prescribed NFHS signals and mechanics presents an environment where the officials are in charge and the game is well-officiated.

Whether calling a violation or a foul, anytime an official blows his/her whistle, he/she shall also raise his/her hand to stop the clock. If a violation is being called, the official will extend one arm above the head with an open palm/fingers extended, while if a foul is being called, the official will raise one arm high above the head with the fist clenched.

When a violation is observed, an official shall complete the following after blowing his/her whistle and stopping the clock:

- Move towards the area of the violation.
- Signal the nature of the violation.
- Signal the direction for the throw-in and the team to make the throw-in by stating the jersey color.
- Indicate the throw-in spot.

All officials are responsible for contact rulings and all fouls. It is imperative that the following procedure be used in this order after an official blows his/her whistle and raising his/her arm to stop the clock:

- (if necessary for player clarification) Delay and extend the other hand, palm down toward the fouling player's hips (i.e., "bird dog").
- While holding the foul signal, move toward the play and fouling player, stop, and verbally inform the player he/she fouled by stating the jersey color and number.
- Lower the foul signal and indicate the nature of the foul by giving a preliminary signal using the approved NFHS signal.
- Indicate what will follow as a result of the foul (throw-in, free throws, made basket, etc.).
- After signaling what will result, wait for players to separate, particularly if they are in close proximity to one another, and then move to the reporting area to announce the foul to the scorer. In general, the reporting area is a rectangular area that runs from the middle of the top of the free throw circle on each end of the floor to an area approximately 10' towards the scorer's table.
- Once in the reporting area, the official will come to a complete stop before communicating with the official scorer.
- Slowly state the color of the jersey of the player who fouled. Visually indicate the number of the player who fouled using a two-handed signal (right hand shows the ten's digit and the left hand shows the single's digit) while verbalizing the number to the scorer.
- Indicate the type of foul committed.
- Indicate what activity should follow (throw-in, free throws, etc.)

For a complete description of all 2-person and 3-person mechanics, please refer to the NFHS Basketball Officials Manual.

Palming/Carrying

Across the country, more and more players are being allowed to illegally dribble the basketball. Likely, a combination of increased viewing of other players doing this act and poor enforcement of the rules by officials has led to this decline in proper fundamentals.

The dribble begins by pushing, throwing or batting the ball to the floor before the pivot foot is lifted. (4-15-3) The act of palming/carryingis when the dribbler allows the ball to come to rest in one or both hands and then continues dribbling. (4-15-4b) This causes the dribble to end and is a violation.

Clarification of Intentional and Flagrant Fouls

There is a distinct difference between an Intentional Foul and a Flagrant Foul. A foul should be ruled an Intentional Foul when a player, while playing the ball, causes excessive contact. It should be called away from the ball when it's a non-basketball play. These are considered either personal or technical fouls.

A Flagrant Foul is violent in nature or a noncontact play demonstrating unacceptable or uncivil behavior. The penalty for a Flagrant Foul is immediate ejection.

There is a concern that there is lack of enforcement for Intentional Fouls. Fouling has become a strategic part at the end of game and officials need to understand the differences between common fouls, Intentional Fouls, and Flagrant Fouls and have the conviction to make the correct call. Was it a basketball play or simply an attempt to stop the clock? As an official, getting the first foul is critical and will help prevent the game from becoming more physical.

Intentional Foul

4-19-ART. 3 An Intentional foul is a personal or technical foul that may or may not be premeditated and is not based solely on the severity of the act. Intentional fouls include, but are not limited to:

• Contact that neutralizes an opponent's obvious advantageous position.
• Contact away from the ball with an opponent who is clearly not involved with a play.
• Contact that is not a legitimate attempt to play the ball/player specifically designed to stop the clock or keep it from starting.
• Excessive contact with an opponent while the ball is live or until an airborne shooter returns to the floor.
• Contact with a thrower-in as in 9-2-10 PENALTY 4.

Flagrant Foul

4-19-ART.4 A flagrant foul may be a personal or technical foul of a violent, savage or uncivil nature, or a technical noncontact foul which displays unacceptable conduct. It may or may not be intentional. If personal, it involves, but is not limited to violent contact such as: striking, kicking and kneeing. If technical, it involves dead-ball contact or noncontact at any time which is extreme or persistent, vulgar or abusive conduct. Fighting is a flagrant act.