

To: All Athletic Directors, Basketball Coaches and Basketball Officials

From: Sally Marquez, Associate Director
Dana Sanchez, Commissioner of Officials

Subject: Basketball Points of Emphasis and Clarification for the 2009 Season
from the NMAA Basketball Rules Interpreters

Date: November 19, 2009

As you may already know, the NMAA has developed a statewide rules interpreters program for all sports for the first time this year. The purpose of the rules interpreters program is to assist our officials in the consistent application of rules throughout the state and to ensure that coaches and officials are on the same page relative to basketball rules. In addition, the five individuals serving as rules interpreters will be the go-to contacts for rules interpretations for our coaches and officials. Their contact information is supplied at the end of this memo.

Our office staff met with the basketball interpreters last month and the group came up with a number of items for clarification and emphasis. They are as follows:

COACHES' BOX AND BENCH DECORUM

The NMAA office has revised its coaches' box policy and it is included at the end of this memo. There were a number of changes and enhancements to the policy and enforcement guidelines for officials that are to be adhered to for the upcoming season. The highlights of the clarification are below:

- Head coaches are to be reminded that they are responsible for the conduct of all bench personnel.
- Only the head coach may stand in the coaching box. Coaches that are consistently, completely and clearly outside of the box are subject to a technical foul. Outside the box is defined as both feet/whole body.
- **NEW MATERIAL:** Officials are to issue an *initial verbal informal* warning to head coaches for being outside of the box or for assistant coaches who are standing or kneeling in the box. ***A second formal warning should be noted in the book (time and which quarter).*** These two warnings should precede issuing a technical foul for being outside of the box. Warnings are not necessary for coaches who are being disrespectful or otherwise demeaning (see below).
- Warnings by officials are not necessary for coaches who disrespectfully address officials, threaten officials, engage in the use of profanity, taunt opponents, engage in gestures which show displeasure with officiating or incite negative behavior from the crowd.
- Coaches are reminded to ask questions to officials. Officials are reminded to answer questions. A general rule of thumb is that valid questions asked in a professional manner require a response. Statements do not.

Again, refer to the full coaches' box policy at the end of this document for more information.

2009-2010 NFHS BASKETBALL POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- 1) **Closely Guarded** – The following areas regarding closely guarded rules are to be emphasized (from *NFHS Basketball Rulebook, pages 65-66*):
 - 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. 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.”
 - 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; 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.”
 - 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.”
- 2) **Traveling** – Areas of specific concern are: the spin move, the jump stop, perimeter shooters taking an extra “hop” prior to releasing the ball and ball handlers lifting the pivot foot prior to releasing the ball on the dribble. You must first find the pivot foot. Then, if a player moves a foot or the feet in any direction in excess of the prescribed limits, a traveling violation has occurred. Officials must know the rule, find the pivot foot and improve call accuracy. Coaches must demand that player execute this skill properly (from *NFHS Basketball Rulebook, page 65*).
 - a. **Guidelines for Teaching and Officiating**
 - Determine the pivot foot immediately.
 - At the start of the dribble, the ball must be released before the pivot foot is lifted.
 - After the dribble has ended, the player may lift the pivot foot, but must release the ball on a pass or shot before the pivot foot returns to the floor.
 - A player may NEVER take two steps while in possession of the ball.
- 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. All information on this point of emphasis can be found on pages 66-67 of the *NFHS Basketball Rulebook*.
 - a. **Team Control** – “In order to understand the administration of the rule, it is necessary to understand 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, when the ball is loose following a try or during a throw-in. The three-second restriction is not in effect when there is no team control and is terminated the instant when team control ends.”

- b. **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.”

COMMUNICATION

A continued point of emphasis from the New Mexico Activities Association and New Mexico Officials Association is that of positive and productive communication between coaches and officials. Remember that we are all working for the best interest of student-athletes. Once coaches and officials are continually engaged in conversation during a game, everyone is doing a disservice to the game by taking the attention off of the ten players on the court. When communicating with one another, remember to be respectful, responsive and professional at all times. Keep conversations succinct and remember that the players need your attention during the game.

MERCY RULE CLARIFICATION

We have had several questions regarding the mercy rule for basketball in our state. Below is the rule, as stated in NMAA Handbook (7.13.1F):

“When a team is ahead at half-time by 35 or more points or becomes 35 or more points ahead in the second half, the clock will stop for any time-out and for two and three shot free throws. If the point differential becomes less than 35 points, regular timing resumes.”

Situation 1: With Team A leading by 34 points in the second half and shooting a 1-and-1, Team A makes the front end of the bonus situation. **Ruling:** The clock would start as Team A has gone ahead by 35 points and it is not a two or three shot free throw situation.

Situation 2: With Team B trailing Team A by 35 points in the second half and Team B shooting free throws, Team B makes the first free throw of the bonus situation. **Ruling:** The clock would not continue to run because the point differential is less than 35 points.

Situation 3: Team A makes a basket and is now ahead by 35 points in the second half. While making the basket, a Team A player is fouled and will shoot one free throw. **Ruling:** The clock would continue to run and Team A would shoot one free throw. The clock will only stop on two and three shot free throws.

Situation 4: Team A is leading by 35 points in the second half and Team B double dribbles. **Ruling:** The clock would continue to run because the mercy rule takes effect in the second half.

The basketball rules interpreters for the 2009-2010 season are:

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If you have rules questions, you are asked to call or email the individual in your region of the state for clarification and interpretation.

Thank you for your attention to this information. If you have questions or if you need additional information on the rules interpreters program, please feel free to contact us. Have a great season!



NEW MEXICO ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION



BASKETBALL COACHES' BOX

NATIONAL FEDERATION RULE AND CLARIFICATIONS

The coaches' box was approved several years in New Mexico by state adoption through the National Federation. In recent years, it seems as though there has been confusion on the part of coaches and officials as to acceptable behavior of coaches' while they are in the coaches' box. Note that there have been some changes made to the original interpretation of this rule. Please read the following rules from the National Federation Basketball Rulebook as well as clarification from the NMAA office:

NATIONAL FEDERATION RULES REGARDING THE COACHES' BOX

Rule 1-13-2: *"The coaching box shall be outlined outside the side of the court on which the scorer's and timer's table and team benches are located. **The area shall be bounded by a line 28 feet from the end line, the sideline, a line no more than 14 feet from the 28-foot line toward the end line, and the team bench.** These lines shall be located off the court, be 2 inches wide."*

Rule 1-13-2 Note: *"State associations may alter the length and placement of the 14-foot (maximum) coaching box."*

***** A 14-foot coaches' box has been approved by the NMAA.***
This is a change from the previously used 6-foot box.**

Rule 10-5-1: *"By state association adoption, the head coach may be off the bench in front of his/her seat within the confines of the designated coaching box, as in 1-13-2, to give instructions to his/her players and/or substitutes."*

Penalty: *"The first technical foul charged directly or indirectly to head coach results in loss of the coaching box privileges and the head coach must remain seated for the remainder of the game, except as in 10-4-4c and d, 10-5-2 and 10-5-3."*

APPLICATION OF THE RULE – NMAA POLICY

- 1) **REQUIREMENT OF COACHES' BOX:**
 - a. All schools must have a coaching box in their gym. If one is not painted on the gym floor, the coaching box must be marked off with tape. If a school does not have a coaching box on the floor, the coach is restricted to sitting on the bench for the duration of the game.
- 2) **ASSISTANT COACHES:**
 - a. Assistant coaches must be seated during play. Kneeling or squatting by an assistant coach is not acceptable. Under no circumstances should an assistant coach be standing during live-ball play. They may stand during timeouts.
 - b. Also, assistant coaches should **not** have dialogue with the officials during a game. Any violation of this rule will result in an indirect technical foul to the head coach and a loss of coaching box privileges.
- 3) **HEAD COACHES:**
 - a. Note that the head coach is responsible for the conduct of ALL bench personnel.
 - b. Head coaches may be standing within the confines of the coaches' box during a game. They may stand in order to coach a player or to address an official. They may only address an official in a professional manner and cannot exit the box in any situation, unless beckoned on the floor to attend to an injured player. Any violation of this rule will result in a direct technical foul to the coach and a loss of coaching box privileges.

- c. A head coach may not designate anyone else to stand in the coaching box. All other bench personnel, other than the head coach, must remain seated.
- d. A head coach may kneel or squat within the confines of the coaching box during the game.
- e. If a player receives a technical foul for dunking prior to a contest, the head coach is charged with an indirect technical foul and loses the coaching box privilege. The player is also assessed a technical foul.
- f. Please keep in mind that the third technical foul (indirect or direct) or the second direct technical foul charged to the head coach results in ejection from the game to the team's locker room or outside the building. After a head coach is ejected, the coaching box is **not** afforded to the assistant who resumes the coaching duties for the remainder of the game.

4) **OFFICIALS' JURISDICTION: ***PLEASE NOTE NEW INFORMATION BELOW!*****

- a. The contest officials have the jurisdiction and discretion to determine whether a coach is violating the rules of the coaches' box. **Officials are to issue an initial verbal informal warning to the head coach for any violation of the coaching box by the head or assistant coach (see #1 and 2 below). A subsequent warning should be noted in the book (time and quarter) for violations of #1 and #2 below prior to issuing a technical foul.** Reasons for the issuance of technical fouls relative to coaches' conduct may be any of the following:
 1. The head coach is consistently outside of the confines of the coaches' box. Outside is defined as both feet/whole body clearly and completely outside of the box.
 2. The assistant coach(es) or other bench personnel continuously stand, squat or kneel in the box. Assistant coaches should remain seated throughout the duration of the contest.
 3. Disrespectfully addressing an official by questioning the integrity of an official, voicing displeasure about officiating through continual or chronic verbal remarks or other such acts. As a reminder, questions require a response; statements do not. **Officials** should answer valid and professionally addressed questions by coaches. **Coaches** are reminded to ask questions to officials. For example, statements such as "3 seconds," "that's a travel," etc., are not subject to a response by officials.
 4. Attempting to influence an official's decision by physically charging toward an official or otherwise threatening an official.
 5. Using profanity or other language that is abusive, vulgar or obscene directed toward officials, opponents or anyone else at the game. This is interscholastic sports and inappropriate language is unacceptable.
 6. Taunting or baiting an opponent.
 7. Objecting to an official's decision by rising from the bench or using gestures. Examples of this would be excessively demonstrating officials' signals (i.e., traveling, holding, verticality) or demonstrating by use of gestures or actions that indicate displeasure with officiating (i.e., the "wave-off," standing with arms extended to sides, etc.).
 8. Any member of the coaching staff engages in any activity which incites negative behavior by the crowd.

Please note that this clarification is being issued in order to bring consistency to the understanding and application of the rule in all areas of the state. Thank you for your cooperation and if you have any questions, please feel free to contact our office.