

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 2010-2011 Season
from the NMAA Basketball Rules Interpreters

Date: December 7, 2010

As you may already know, the NMAA has developed a statewide rules interpreters program for all sports last 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.

This year's items of clarification and points of emphasis are as follows:

CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT:

Athletic Directors, coaches and officials in our state have all been provided with information about concussion either at clinics during the summer, NFHS rulebooks and other publications and/or online courses regarding concussions. The area of concussion management has become a point of emphasis for the NFHS and, with the passage of SB1 by the New Mexico Legislature, has become a "hot button" issue statewide.

The following are *mechanics for officiating a concussion* in any and all sports, in concert with the NFHS Concussion Management Guidelines and additional information provided by the National Association of Sports Officials:

- 1) When a student-athlete displays possible signs and symptoms of a concussion as listed in the NFHS rulebook, stop the game and visit with the athlete in question. You may want to get one of your partners involved with you in this process.
- 2) Check the student-athlete's behavior against the list of signs and symptoms. If signs or symptoms are present, remove the student-athlete from the contest.
- 3) Avoid any discussion of cause (how the athlete was injured) with anyone, including coaches, players and fans. The cause is immaterial.
- 4) Do not tell the coaches that you are removing the player because he/she has a concussion. Stay somewhat vague in your discussion with the coach. You may tell the coach simply, "I need you to take a look at Player X." If the coach does ask why, you can state that the player exhibited one of the signs and symptoms (i.e., dizziness, disorientation, headache, nausea, etc.). Do not mention that you think the player has a concussion because then you are crossing the line into a diagnosis!
- 5) Make note of the jersey number of the athlete, the time at which he/she was removed from the game and the time of re-entry into the game (if applicable).
- 6) Do not ask anyone to sign anything. The new NFHS guidelines and state law do not require signatures from coaches or appropriate health care professionals.
- 7) During the removal of an athlete from a contest, continue to supervise both teams, both benches and keep the athletes separated.

- 8) Do not render first aid to athletes and do not attempt to move them under any circumstance (if they are on the ground).
- 9) Remember that an athlete does not have to be unconscious to have sustained a concussion.
- 10) Most importantly, remember that the decision for a player to return to play falls on the appropriate health care professional and the head coach. The liability for returning an athlete to play is on the school personnel. Do not offer opinions about an athlete's ability to reenter the game and do not ask questions about the medical personnel. What happens on the sidelines after you remove a player who is displaying signs and symptoms of a concussion is out of your control. Just keep note of who you removed and when and if the player returned so that you have the necessary documentation should questions arise. Leave return to play decisions to the appropriate individuals on the sideline.

HUDDLES AT CENTER CIRCLE

Beginning this year, neither team (home or visitor) can huddle on or near the center circle before, during or after basketball contests. Due to a number of situations that have occurred over the past couple of years, our office is mandating that teams do not engage in this practice in order to deescalate the perception of intimidation, disrespect and unsporting behavior. Teams will still be allowed to huddle at their free throw semicircle or directly in front of their team bench. Please note this item is included in the NFHS Basketball Points of Emphasis for the 2010-2011 school year. As stated in the NFHS Basketball Rulebook:

"Teams entering the gymnasium prior to the contest should not run through the area occupied by the opposing team or under the basket where opponents are warming up. Teams should only enter, jog and warm up on their half of the court. Gatherings intended to motivate a team after the warm-up period, during or following player introductions and post-game celebrations should be performed in the area directly in front of the team bench."

QUARTERS OF PLAY

We have had a couple of questions this year about participants who exceed five quarters of play against one school in a given night. By rule (NMAA Handbook, 7.13.1E), "A player is considered to have played a game when he/she competes interscholastically in five or less quarters on any day or night against a given school. (Five quarters is the maximum permitted.) This applies to all levels including Junior High/Middle School. ***If a player enters into his/her sixth quarter of play in a day, a technical foul will be assessed on the coach and the player removed from the game.***"

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 brief and to the point and remember that the players need your attention during the game.

PRE-GAME CONFERENCE AND SPORTSMANSHIP

Our office has received concerns from a number of officials about the pre-game conference with officials, captains and coaches. It has been reported in several instances that the head coach is not present for these conferences and that assistant coaches are participating in place of the head coach. It is important that head coaches are part of the pre-game in the interest of sportsmanship and as our state continues to follow the tenets of *Pursuing Victory With Honor*.

COACHES' BOX AND BENCH DECORUM

The NMAA office has revised its coaches' box policy and it is included at the end of this memo. ***As a reminder, 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.***

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.
- **REMINDER (new material from last year):** 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.

2010-2011 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) **Perimeter Play**– Two illegal actions are taking place on the perimeter of the court that are particularly problematic:

a. **Hand-Checking**

- Hand-checking is any tactic using the hands or arms that allows a player, on offense or defense, to control (hold, impede, push, divert, slow or prevent) the movement of an opposing player.
- Hand-checking is a foul and is not incidental contact.
- Defensive players shall not have hand(s) on the offensive player. When a player has a hand on, two hands on or jabs a hand or forearm on an opponent, it is a foul.
- When a player contacts an opponent with his or her hands as an aid in starting, stopping, driving around, defending a screen, controlling or anticipating the opponent's next move, it is a foul. Players may not place their hands on an opponent, with or without the ball.
- Much of the roughness in the interscholastic game today is a direct result of not assessing the proper penalty when illegal contact with the hands occurs. Officials – make sure you enforce this rule at all phases of the game!

b. **Palming**

- When the hand is in contact with the ball and the palm of the hand is beyond the perpendicular position (more than a handshake), tilted in a skyward position so the ball has come to rest on the hand, the dribble has ended.
- When the player then pushes the ball to the floor, he or she is starting another dribble (illegal dribble), which is a violation.

3) **Principle of Verticality** – The NFHS is concerned that the principle of verticality is not being applied consistently, especially in situations that involve blocked shots. Verticality applies to a legal position. The following are the basic components of the principle of verticality:

- Legal guarding must be obtained initially and movement thereafter must be legal.
- For this position, the defender may rise or jump vertically and occupy the space within his or her vertical plane.
- The hands and arms of the defender may be raised within his/her vertical plane while on the floor or in the air.
- The defender should not be penalized for leaving the floor vertically or having his/her hands and arms extended within his or her vertical plane.
- The offensive player, whether on the floor or airborne, may not "clear out" or cause contact within the defender's vertical plane; this is a foul.
- The defender may not "belly up" or use the lower part of the body or arms to cause contact outside his or her vertical plane; this is a foul.
- The player with the ball is to be given no more protection or consideration than the defender in judging which player has violated the rules.

- Misunderstanding of this rule generally results in the defensive player being charged with a foul when actually his or her vertical plane has likely been violated.

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.”

NOTE: In two or three free throw situations, if a free throw is not successful and the ball is to remain live, the clock shall be started when the ball touches or is touched by a player on the court. If play is resumed by a throw in after a made free throw, the clock shall be started when the ball touches, or is legally touched by, a player on the court after it is released by the thrower

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.

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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!



**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:

- a. The contest officials have the jurisdiction and discretion to determine whether a coach is violating the rules of the coaches' box. **Officials should issue an initial warning to the head coach for any violation of the coaching box by the head or assistant coach (see #1 and 2 below).** 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.