

Advantage / Disadvantage on the Rebound

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Alamo Heights Coach, Charlie Boggess, in San Antonio, Texas, wants his players to take charges. He even gives out an annual award for it. His staff plots charges after each and every game, and they evaluate game tapes closely looking for *which* player gets into position to take the charge and then whether he gets the official's call for a charge — or is tagged for a blocking foul. Other coaches are just as adamant about their post players getting rebounds. It may *not* be just the centers or forwards who are charted for rebounds. The *whole* team may be charted — a direct indication of just how much a coach emphasizes rebounds, especially offensive rebounds.

Look on the web for stats

Some schools (and colleges) keep extensive stats on rebounds. It's impressive to see point guards, for example, who are able to squirm into the lane and get rebounds *just* because they are there nearby. When officials see guards rebounding, usually it is because those players are coached to be close by, in the lane, and near rebounds so they can steal from the opposing rebounder. That, in turn, might just get them a quick, easy lay-up.

Officials need to have a sense about rebounding action. It can help them know just how much a coach wants good defensive actions to be rewarded, and why they are sometimes looking for fouls on illegal action on rebounds.

Contact on rebounds: situation 1

Most good coaches want every player to be "ball aware" so that when a shot goes up, each player gets position and puts a butt into an opponent — effectively screening him from getting a rebound. We'll sometimes see this even on the perimeter, where the intent is to prevent the backcourt players from getting rebounds. That brings up the first type of illegal contact on a rebound. A2 launches a 3-pointer, returns to the floor, and B2 knocks him down. A2 falls to the floor because B2 backed into him and knocked him down. A2 didn't stumble or trip on his own feet.

Trail observes all of this and has a decision to make. A2 was taken out of *that* play — including his right to follow his own shot and get his own rebound. A2 was *also* probably taken out of the next play, including defense of the opponents on a fast break. B2 gained an advantage, and A2 was placed at a significant disadvantage. That's not fair, and it's certainly not incidental contact. Trail should make the foul call. If it can be effectively called as part of the shot (which it usually can), then Trail should make it a shooting foul and give A2 three free throws.

If A2 is legally screened / blocked from attacking his own basket for a rebound, that is good defense. We need to allow that to occur and not penalize it.



Contact on rebounds: situation 2

Now look at the photo. Who is fouling whom? White has position, but Blue 4 is pushing him. On the other hand, it is possible the player in White behind Blue 4 may be tugging on his arm or leaning on his shoulder. Assuming, though, the only call comes from the Lead....

White 31 has position, but Blue 4 is straight-arming him and gets the rebound. Why? It's because White 31 has been displaced just enough for 4 to get the advantage *and* the ball. White 31 was disadvantaged. Lead has a great view because it is right in his primary area of responsibility. Such displacement was not fair. It was deliberate, not incidental contact. Lead should make the foul call and give the ball to White. If White is in bonus, then we shoot free throws (1 + 1 or 2).

How much of an advantage?

I use the word "deliberate"; such a foul is *not* "intentional." Without getting too technical about the definition on judging rebounding action, if something is judged to be deliberate it is not necessarily intentional. Yet if White is knocked to the floor, elbowed hard enough, or Blue uses two hands to really throw White 31

to the side, then maybe (likely) an intentional foul is in order. We judge the extent of the "damage" — otherwise known as "disadvantage" — based on a lot of things, not the least of which is what was inflicted on White. If White 31 is hurt, we better have an intentional foul — possibly even a flagrant one.

Contact but no foul: situation 3

Look at the photo again. Consider the situation as follows: The ball hits the rim, but rebounds to the opposite side of the lane. Lead is in the same position, and sees Blue 4 straight-arm White 31. Does Lead have a whistle? This takes even more judgment. Where did the ball rebound? True, there was contact, but it had no influence on the play. Might we judge *that* to be incidental contact? Probably.

I always have a problem with that one because my first instinct is to get a foul. I know that about myself, so I work hard to have a patient whistle and see the whole play and the outcome of the contact. My choice as Lead is to have no foul, but the first opportunity I have I will mention it to Blue 4 and if possible to his coach. That gives fair warning. The next time Blue 4 does a similar action, especially if White 31 (or another White opponent) resists, the likely outcome is a foul.

Rebounding fouls are another form of rough play

The bigger they are (meaning how mature, as well as physical stature), the more contact we may judge to be incidental. Yet we must control it and make sure the play does not escalate to become "rough." The better officials always keep control of a game. The best officials have a feel for what each coach and each team can play through. Then they make consistent calls from the toss to the ending buzzer.