

## **Referee the Defence**

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### **The block/charge is not the toughest call to make if you're looking at the right things**

"What is the toughest call in basketball ... the block /charge?" Consider a multiple foul situation followed by technical fouls on both coaches and players leaving the bench for fight is the toughest call. Do you know how to administer that? The block/charge is not difficult if you know what to look for. Let's start by reviewing some basic ideas. When guarding a player with the ball, the player with the ball must be prepared to immediately stop or change direction when the defender appears in the player's path and assumes a guarding position. The dribbler does not get any time or distance to stop or change direction in order to avoid contact. What is a legal guarding position? The defender merely must have both feet on the floor and be facing the opponent. Once the defender obtains a legal guarding position, even if the defender beats the player with the ball to the spot by a split second, the burden then shifts to the player with the ball to stop or change direction in order to avoid contact. Ask yourself: Was the defender at the spot first without illegally contacting an opponent? Was the defender facing the offensive player? Did the defender have both feet on the floor when obtaining the legal guarding position? If you answered "yes" to all three questions, then the burden is on the player with the ball to stop or change direction in order to avoid contact. The defensive player is then allowed to stay in the path of the player with the ball and move to maintain position after initially obtaining legal guarding position. In that situation, the responsibility for contact is still on the player with the ball unless the defender is moving toward the player with the ball when contact occurs. Remember, the defender is never allowed to move into the path of an airborne offensive player. If, however, the defender gets to a spot first and the offensive player then becomes airborne, the burden to avoid contact is on the airborne player.

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After determining that the offensive player is dribbling straight to the basket, take your eyes off the dribbler and locate the defensive player. Where is the defensive player? Has the defensive player established a legal guarding position? Has the defensive player legally gotten to the spot first, initially facing the dribbler with both feet on the floor? If so, the offensive player has committed a foul if significant contact occurs.

Was the defensive player moving to maintain a legal guarding position after initially establishing it? If so, the defender also has not committed a foul. If contact occurs when the defender has one foot off the floor when moving to maintain a legal guarding position, the foul is on the dribbler.

To say that the defender has committed a foul merely because he did not have both feet on the floor when contact occurred is just plain incorrect.

In addition to knowing the all-important distinction between initially establishing legal guarding position and then moving to maintain it, the key is to focus on the defensive player, or as it's commonly called, "refereeing the defence."

Too often officials focus only on the offensive player

concentrating too much the offensive player's movements, and do not get a good look at the positioning of the defender. After all, what's the worst

thing the offensive player can do in that situation - commit a travel or illegal dribble?

Play the percentages and make sure to get a good look at the

possible crash. Locate the defensive player, determine whether the defender initially obtained a legal guarding position, and then the call is easy.

Refereeing the defence will change you percentage and better enable your perspective and better enable you to see the whole play. By anticipating

the play and focusing on the defence, you will be amazed how much easier it is to make the correct call.