

## **ARTICLE 14**

### **Right Place at the Right Time**

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#### **And suddenly...**

. . . you're going with the flow, the game is humming right along, and it happens: A1 loses the ball off the dribble at the top of the key, and Team B begins the fast break.

You're now the Trail when B1 pulls up for a 3-point shot and you're stuck 15-20 feet behind the play. The ball falls way short, and now Coach B — as well as the crowd — is all over you, changing the tenor of the game and threatening your credibility for the rest of the evening.

More than likely, A3, who was nominally guarding B1 on the break, got a hand out and nicked B1 on the elbow, causing his shot to go awry. Everyone saw it — except you and your partners. It simply may not be possible for you to come off the base line fast enough to get to a position where you can see this foul.

#### **Get help!**

But if you can't get there, certainly your partners can help out. Clearly, if you are working 3-man mechanics, you can get assistance from the Center or even the Lead — especially if the play is cross-court from the Center.

It's a little tougher in 2-man mechanics: the Lead has to be mentally prepared to take charge of the situation although technically the foul may occur well out of his primary. He has to be aware of your position on the floor, how the play is developing, and ready to blow his whistle.

That must be one of the items covered in your pre-game. Being mentally prepared is a large part of making the right call.

#### **Don't get straight-lined!**

Keeping the right angle on the play is an all-important concern of mechanics. When you are the Lead, and the ball goes into the post to your right, make sure you move into a position where you can see illegal body contact or a whack on the arm by the defensive player. You don't want to be left staring at the number on the defensive player's back.

Conversely, when the ball goes to the corner on your left, make sure you move to see any possible fouls — and stay with the shooter! Your partner(s) will cover the rebounding situations from the Center and Trail positions.

### **Center/Trail - help your partner!**

When the ball goes in the post and the offensive player rolls on his *outside* shoulder to the middle of the lane, the Center (or Trail) must share the responsibility of primary coverage. Often the Lead in that situation will be looking at someone's back or peering through a forest of players.

The Lead can help by taking a step or two laterally *away* from the basket, to perhaps get a better angle on the play. Though the natural inclination is to take a step closer to the basket, try working "outside-in," not "inside-out." Getting an angle for an open look is more important than sticking to some traditional, standardized position.

### **Good preparation leads to good officiating**

So much of officiating is being in the right place to make the right call. That is good positioning, which also ensures you'll get the open angle look.

A good pre-game conference leads to good mental preparation. Together with good cooperation, that often leads to a well-officiated game.