

## ARTICLE 13

### Things We Need to Do Better — Part II

#### *Don't penalize the taller player*

*Jim Dixon*

*{Jim Dixon is a NCAA Division II official in Texas.}*

And someone in the peanut gallery yells, "OVER THE BACK!!!"

It seems like that happens in almost every game, and then some official gets intimidated and can't resist the urge to blow. However, there was no foul!

Making good calls (or no-calls) on rebounds means we must have an angle to see who has position, and who is invading that legal position. We cannot do that if we are too close to the lane and are watching two rebounders jockey for position.

#### **See the whole play**

When a player gets the inside position, it is also important how she got there. Once she is there legally, it continues to be an issue if she retains her inside position legally. Good players have been coached to block out, and they should, and we should allow them. Yet, they are not allowed to push and displace.

As it turns out, if both are pushing/nudging each other to get position, then both are at fault. Yet, we really shouldn't have a double foul unless things are really getting out of control.

Instead, someone has inside position, and has vertical space that they are allowed during the rebounding action. They often can then jump forward and/or up, but not backward into the player behind, who has her own vertical space. The inside player can block out, but not displace. There is a difference, and good officials know what it is.

#### **First: two-person mechanics**

Look at the action photo. Blue has inside position, but may not jump backward to retrieve the rebound and displace White. If she does, she is responsible for the contact, and a foul may result.

If White, the taller player, can reach over the head of Blue and get the rebound without displacing Blue, she is legal. Plus, that is *not* "over the back."

If this action happens on Lead's side of the court, then Lead must be wide on the endline in order to see if something illegal has occurred. If Lead gets straightlined, he needs to suck air. Then he needs to make sure that the next time he moves laterally 6-8 feet to get a better angle on the rebound.

Officials in 2-person mechanics need to get large views of the court and consequently make calls from a longer distance. Two officials will always miss some things, but in the scheme of things, violations take a back seat to fouls. Yet, if good foul calls are to be called, we must see the action from the proper angle. Work wide and see a bigger portion of the court when working 2-person mechanics.

### **Next: three-person mechanics**

Let me present two caveats here. First, if you're working with a weak outside partner, give him or her a chance to make the push foul call on illegal contact on a rebound. If there is no whistle *and* you have seen the whole play, make the call.

On the other hand, a good (better than average) outside official should be trusted to make such calls, and the Lead — in general — should leave those calls alone.

Is your crew using men's or women's 3-person mechanics? High school mechanics are very similar to men's NCAA mechanics. Women's NCAA mechanics are quite different, and who makes calls/no-calls on rebounds is very dependent on which system is used.

### **Lead: small primary (triangle)**

NCAA men's mechanics. Pre-game this issue very carefully. Determine if Lead has a triangle for coverage. If so, Lead usually will not make rebounding calls like the one illustrated in the photo shown above. That is because Lead should be close to the lane and usually cannot see between players.

Only if the inside player gets pushed far under the basket or out-of-bounds will it be apparent, and even then the outside officials should be trusted to make the call.

### **Lead: large primary (rectangle)**

NCAA women's mechanics. If you are unfamiliar with the large rectangular primary area of coverage that the NCAA has adopted from the WNBA, then ask someone in your local association to diagram it for you. Those of us who don't use this coverage method should still understand that officials who do have a

significantly larger and different area of responsibility. Thus, who makes the calls on rebounding fouls varies somewhat.

If Lead works wide in women's mechanics, he or she will still generally defer to the Trail to make this type of call if the shot attempt occurs in Lead's primary. That is because Trail's primary area extends into the paint and Lead may have to follow the shooter (somewhere along the endline or even on a 3-point try in the corner) back to the floor.

If the shot attempt occurs in Trail's primary area out beyond the free throw lane line extended, then Lead must officiate the area near the lane. He must also see within his primary area *the whole play*.

Lead can make the call but should make sure that this is pre-gamed so that good coverage is provided. The shooter must be protected as she returns to the floor. Either Lead or Trail must stay with the shooter.

Good rebounding coverage does not occur automatically. As you can see, it depends on the type of mechanics and how it is pre-gamed. Remember that fact tomorrow night as you get ready for your next game.