



BASKETBALL

COMMENTS ON THE 2008-09 RULES REVISIONS

HEADBANDS DEFINED AND COLORS ADDED (3-5-3): Any item that goes around the *entire* head (elastic strips/bands, pre-wrap, headbands, etc.) shall meet the rule requirements regarding color, maximum size, logo restrictions and team uniformity. The colors of black and beige were also added to the list of permissible colors a team may wear. This change makes the rule more consistent in application and enforcement. The additional colors will provide student-athletes with the same low-cost options previously available, while maintaining team uniformity.

FREE-THROW LANE SPACES CHANGED (8-1-4b, c and d): During a free throw, all players will move up one lane space, leaving the two marked lane spaces closest to the end line vacant. A new mark (2 inches by 8 inches) must be applied to the lane line near the free-throw line to designate the last 3-foot marked lane space. This rules change may reduce rough play during free-throw situations while maintaining defensive rebounding percentages within an acceptable range.

PENALTY FOR ILLEGAL UNIFORMS CHANGED (10-5-5 New): A maximum of one technical foul shall be charged directly to the head coach when a participant wears an illegal jersey, illegal pants/skirt or an illegal number. This rules change reduces the penalty from one technical foul assessed to *each* starter and *each* substitute to a maximum of one technical foul assessed directly to the head coach. There has been a proliferation of illegal uniforms worn by teams within the past several years. This change reduces the penalty, but puts the responsibility for illegal uniforms where it ultimately belongs – with the head coach, not the participant.

2008-09 POINTS OF EMPHASIS

1. **LEGAL UNIFORMS.** Improvement has been made in the ordering and purchasing of legal uniforms, including the mandatory white home uniform. The NFHS is also working with manufacturers to improve compliance with NFHS uniform design specifications (3-4). Schools/teams are encouraged to review these design specifications prior to ordering and purchasing new uniforms. In part because of last year's emphasis on legal uniforms, the penalty for wearing an illegal uniform has been changed for 2008-09 (see Comments on the Rules Revisions). Officials should also continue to enforce proper wearing of the uniform and direct players to leave the game when a uniform is not being worn properly. Team members are also prohibited from playing if wearing items such as jewelry, illegal undershirts (including a visible manufacturer's logo) or undergarments that extend below the pants/skirt. Players in violation of those rules may not enter or shall be directed to leave the game.
2. **ROUGH PLAY.** For the fifth time in the past eight years, rough play is a point of emphasis. The committee continues to be concerned with the increasing level of physical play being permitted. Officials and coaches are charged with promoting good sportsmanship, encouraging fair play and minimizing the risk of injury to student-athletes. Rough play creates conflict between players and increases the opportunity for injuries.

- A. **Post play.** The key word is displacement. If a player is displaced, it is a foul! Offensive players creating space by “backing down” a defender, or a defender moving an offensive player off his/her spot on the floor, are examples of post-play fouls that must be called.
- B. **Hand-checking.** Defenders are not permitted to have hands on the dribbler or offensive players away from the ball. Hand-checking is not incidental contact; it gives a tremendous advantage to the person using illegal hands/tactics. An offensive player who uses his/her hands or body to push off in order to create a more favorable position has committed a foul. Regardless of where it happens on the floor, when a player:
- 1) Continuously places a hand on the opposing player – it is a foul.
 - 2) Places both hands on a player – it is a foul.
 - 3) Continuously jabs a hand or forearm on an opponent – it is a foul.
- C. **Loose balls.** Rough play and excessive contact while attempting to secure a loose ball continue to be a concern. Coaches, players and officials must understand that a loose-ball situation is not consent for a player to “jump on” an opponent on the floor in an attempt to create a held ball. Likewise, merely because a player is “going for the ball” does not give that player permission to “take out” an opponent who is in a more advantageous position. Incidental contact (4-27) allows for contact when players are in equally favorable positions.

3. **TIME-OUTS.** The proper granting of time-outs continues to be of great concern. During live-ball situations, it is imperative that officials ensure *player control* before granting a time-out. Additionally, officials must ensure that the time-out request is coming from a player or the head coach of the team in control. Coaches must realize that officials have other responsibilities to the game that require their immediate attention. As a result, coaches must understand that just because a time-out was requested does not mean that a time-out will be granted. During loose-ball situations, when there is doubt as to which player has obtained control, officials should *not* grant a time-out, but rather rule a held ball.

4. **SLAPPING THE BACKBOARD.** The incidents of players slapping the backboard are increasing throughout the country. The rules specify that “intentionally slapping or striking the backboard” is a technical foul (10-3-5). The spirit and intent of that rule is to penalize a player for drawing attention to him/herself or as a means of venting frustration. A player who strikes the backboard in a legitimate attempt to block a try for goal should not be penalized. Basket interference cannot be ruled in either of the above situations. Basket interference only occurs if the ball is interfered with while in the cylinder above the basket ring or by touching either the ball or any part of the basket while the ball is on or within the basket (4-6).

5. **OFFICIALS’ MECHANICS AND SIGNALS.** Communication and consistency remain the most important elements of good officiating. It is essential for officials to be familiar and comfortable with proper NFHS officiating mechanics and signals. The primary reasons for utilizing only approved NFHS mechanics and signals are:

- Effective court coverage related to Primary Coverage Areas.
- Effective communication between officiating partner(s).
- Provide immediate information and feedback to coaches, players, scorers, timers and fans.

Signals are used to communicate and should never be used to call attention to the official. The majority of signals are used to indicate what has or is happening. Approved NFHS signals are dignified, informative and meaningful. The use of unauthorized signals frequently confuses, because the meaning is unknown. Problems are also created when officials engage in “hit and run” officiating. This occurs when an official blows the whistle and immediately leaves the area without taking the time to follow the proper procedures for calling the foul or violation. Signals should be given in a manner that is calm, under control, unhurried and professional.