

January 2012

Pregame

Welcome to the second issue of "On the Maples." Did you ever think you had a "pet peeve?" Watching basketball intently the past few months helped me to remember what a "pet peeve" was. Let me describe as a former player, (that term is used lightly), former coach (that one, too), former official (note the word former), parent, and evaluator (ran out of formers) one that has been a mystery to me.

I have the defense beat, driving the lane, pick the ball up to dunk (that's me), and get hit before I take off, but handle the contact and still finish the dunk (playing on an eight foot rim at the time). The whistle blows and I am thinking I have an "and one," but wait, the calling official says it is "on the floor!" Help me understand why officials would choose to reward the defense by taking away a perfectly performed offensive move that leads to a basket, when the defense was clearly beat?

Page 39, Rule 4, Article 3, states the try starts when the player begins a motion which habitually precedes the release of the ball. I do believe when I pick the ball up to lay it in (dunk in my case), it would follow the above definition.

Camps I have attended also called this particular call, a "patronizing" call. Calling it on the floor keeps the defensive team's coach fairly calm, and the offensive coach mostly shakes his head. Count it like you should, the defensive coach probably will say, "this isn't the NBA." Think this one through, and remember, reward the team that deserves it and work not to patronize.

The Tip

Our lead-off tip of the month is a continuation from last month and covers "who takes the call when we have a block-charge possibility when a player drives to the basket?" The newsletter last month stated we wanted more C opportunities IF the play was on C's side of the paint. There have been further discussions and a few phone calls, so with Mr. Dolliver's blessing, we feel the most important thing to do is to make sure you cover it in pre-game and know who "gets" it if it occurs. Finish this year strong and either C or L can get it, and hopefully next year it will be part of our mechanics and be definitive.

Tip two involves game management and "flow." I can remember being extremely guilty of this: blowing the whistle more than needed. I was blessed to have had Bill Lewis as a teacher, then add the many camps, my role as an official became more defined. Our job is to manage the game, not dictate it. We want to be cohesive with the players and coaches, hoping they understand what will be managed, so our game "flows" like we are not even there. See if you can save a player a foul, and ask yourself as the play enfolds, if you REALLY need to stop play.

1st Quarter

Our first quarter information comes from Mr. Dolliver and concerns players and how much they can play in a day. Mr. Dolliver sent the following and comes from the NSAA bylaws concerning what to do if a player does play seven quarters in one day.

Remember, they can only play six quarters in one day. One exception is they may play eight quarters if the length of the quarters in each contest is six minutes. Any participation in a quarter shall count as a quarter of

participation. Overtime counts as participation in the fourth quarter. The penalty is a technical foul on the player, an indirect technical foul to the coach, and the player is removed from the game.

Gary Troth, veteran Allen Eagle now living in Sioux City, Iowa, sends this question to center court for further analysis. A1 and B1 are attempting to gain possession of a loose ball near the sideline. A1 gains possession and he is leaning/falling and lands on B1 who is partially out of bounds. A1 does not travel or touch any of the court out of bounds, he simply is laying on B1 who is partially inbounds and out of bounds. You make the call!

Your call should be nothing unless the BALL in possession of A1 touches B1, then it would be B's possession because A had possession and touched something out of bounds with the ball.

2nd Quarter

Our second quarter involves technical fouls. I am sure you read Stu Pospisil's column about the team that was assessed a technical foul for calling an excessive time-out, and, the player that called the timeout was incorrectly assessed a personal foul, which in this case was his fifth. We benefitted from this by learning something before we ruled incorrectly in the same circumstance. This does give center court the opportunity to encourage officials to read page 72 of the rules book and after reading it, spend some time with that page. Might not hurt to laminate it, fold it in half, put it in your back pocket, and carry it along on the court. Administrative technicals can become more of a problem than you want. Now, remember to set the possession arrow correctly as we enter the second half of the newsletter.

3rd Quarter

Former (I regained a former) Norfolk Senior Legion manager and insect repellent guru, Jim Bartee of Norfolk, wired center court about a possession arrow miscue. He was officiating a contest where the R set the arrow correctly at half, and, as they left the court, it was green ball. When they began the second half, they gave the ball to white, which was the way the arrow was now pointing. Approximately ten seconds had expired beginning the third quarter when the timer buzzes the horn during live play. No one was attacking and no one had scored in this quarter, so the officials stopped play and went to the scorer's table to confer. The crew finds out they had set the arrow correctly in favor of green, but the scorer had inadvertently switched the arrow to white, thus the incorrect team, being white, began the second half with possession. What would you have done?

Unfortunately, center court knows of some officials who would have simply started over since nothing happened, but this error is not correctable. Possession would resume with white in possession and green having the possession arrow in their direction.

4th Quarter

This month's fourth quarter head-scratcher again comes from your author, the guy at center court. This one becomes a fourth-quarter lollapalooza since we spent the first quarter discussing this last month. Observations as a fan and evaluator has allowed me the "pain" of seeing this happen twice and we have not called it correct. Please, know this one and take care of you.

You are taking the ball out of bounds, on the sideline in your front court or under your basket and you throw the ball to your teammate at the top of the key or anywhere in your front court. The ball hits him in the hands, he never has control, deflects, and it rolls into the backcourt. He recovers it. Now what do you call? You will find the answer immediately after overtime.

A minute left in regulation in this month's newsletter – one more from center court. A1 and A2 are running their offense and A1 passes the ball to A2 and he drops it or muffs it. A2 recovers his miss and takes off dribbling. You make the call!

This is another one we need to be aware. Too many officials are stopping play and calling double dribble when A2 had not used his first dribble. Remember, you can always recover a muff, and you may dribble – that simple. This rule cost our daughter's Elkhorn Valley team in 2007 in the state semi-final against Perkins County, with a three point lead and one minute left in regulation.

She had received a pass from across court that she didn't catch cleanly, dropped it, picked it up, and took off dribbling. You can imagine what her father had taught her and guess what; she gets nailed with a double dribble. Perkins County hits a three on their next possession, and goes on to beat Elkhorn Valley in overtime.

My apologies for using a personal story, but all I hope is this information will assist your officiating at critical times of your career and help more people understand what truly is the correct ruling.

Overtime

Issue two of overtime will deal with the same subject matter as issue one. Mechanics! Ah, the soapbox! Evaluators are seeing much of the same thing and my definition of it would be it seems there are few who truly believe mechanics are important. Some examples would be slow counts (practice with a clock), arm at different angles on three-point attempt signal (practice in mirror, see how you look and follow the manual), travel calls (more mirror work –what makes you look stronger), reporting of numbers to table (mirror does not lie – keep the numbers within your body frame), arm up with open or closed fist to stop clock (a reminder to use high school mechanics to stop clock), and visual counts on ten and five second violations (parallel with floor and concise).

My pep talk would be to just be the best you can be if you are going to want to help high school athletes. They deserve our best look, our best attitude, our best demeanor, and our best mechanics. We look sharp others around us just might begin reflecting the same attitude. I hope you are officiating for not only the love for the game, but a true desire to stay a positive part of the game.

Soapbox now in original storage area and on with your answer to our fourth quarter lollapalooza. There is no over and back if possession has not been established. Thus, no matter where A1 takes it out and passes to his teammate in the front court, if the teammate does not gain possession, and the ball gets to backcourt, there is no over and back. I agree, it probably will not look good, but, work to make the correct call. After all, it is why we get the big bucks!

NSAA Evaluator Jeff Wolfe sent a few comments and one of them was "to officiate verticality." When he mentioned this, he was saying too many fouls are being called on the defensive player standing in the lane with his arms straight in the air. I believe his exact words were, "we are calling it on the wrong player too often." Tie this comment to what we discussed earlier about "patronizing." There seems to be a connection.

One last helpful hint from Jeff that can apply to every situation, and I will quote him verbatim. "If someone goes to the floor, know how they got there."

Sincere thanks for the calls and a busy email system. The banter and discussion that accompanies every question will only make this organization stronger. The tough time of the year is here – calls will be scrutinized, discussed, and dissected, along with your abilities. Stay above everything, communicate, and be strong and as Bill used to say, "Trust YOUR judgment." Until next month, see you "on the maples."