



"Making A Difference In The Game"

CENTRAL CONNECTICUT BOARD #6 of Approved Basketball Officials

One Rule + One Mechanic + One Interpretation = the Board #6 Way

MOST MISUNDERSTOOD BASKETBALL RULES

Prepared by David Anderson, Bill McKernan, and Peter Palermino (revised 9-17-07)

The following information is presented as a general overview and reminder to basketball officials. We hope you will find this information pertinent and valuable. We have presented the information in a manner that helps streamline the rule book language so it is understood by all. We welcome your comments or additions.

Officiating Philosophy

The primary job of the basketball official is to permit the basketball game to progress within the rule with as little interference as possible. IAABO teaches the basic officiating philosophy as promoted originally by Oswald Tower in the 1940s; **“It is the purpose of the rules to penalize a player who, by reason of an illegal act, has placed the opponent at a disadvantage.”** If there is no apparent disadvantage to an opponent, then in reality, no rule violation has occurred. This philosophy, however, assumes that the official has sport intelligence and mature judgment, which take years to develop. The official must use discretion in applying this judgment.

Basketball is a game whereby many situations occur that can be very confusing. Basketball officials do not make calls that decide the outcome of a game. Players commit fouls and violations and the rules determine the consequences. Officials are **unbiased arbiters of the game** and not concerned with who wins or loses but **fairness and safety**.

Basket Interference And Goaltending

A player cannot touch the ball, ring, or net while the ball is on the ring or within the basket. A player cannot touch the ball if it is in the imaginary cylinder above the ring. These are examples of **basket interference**. It is legal to touch the ring or the net if the ball is above the ring and not touching the ring, even if the ball is in the imaginary cylinder above the ring.

Goaltending is contacting the ball during an attempt for goal that is on its downward flight, above and outside the ring, with a chance to go in. On most layups, the ball is going up after it contacts the backboard. It is legal to pin the ball against the backboard if the ball is still on its way to the basket. Goaltending is not basket interference because it occurs outside of the basket.

Slapping the backboard is neither basket interference nor goaltending and points cannot be awarded. A player who strikes a backboard so forcefully that it cannot be ignored because it is an attempt to draw attention to the player, or a means of venting frustration, may be assessed a **technical foul**. When a player simply attempts to block a shot and accidentally slaps the backboard it is neither a violation nor is it a technical foul.

The front, top, sides, and bottom of the **backboard** are all in play. It is a violation when the ball passes over the backboard from either direction. The back of a backboard is out of bounds as well as the supporting structures.



CENTRAL CONNECTICUT BOARD #6 of Approved Basketball Officials

"Making A Difference In The Game"

One Rule + One Mechanic + One Interpretation = the Board #6 Way

It is legal to **grasp or hang on the ring** if a player is avoiding a potential injury to oneself or another player.

Traveling

A **travel** violation occurs when a player lifts their pivot foot before they release the ball to start a dribble. On a pass or a try for goal, the pivot foot may be lifted, but may not return to the floor before the ball is released.

A player may **slide on the floor** while trying to secure a loose ball until that player's momentum stops. This is not a travel. At that point, that player cannot attempt to get up or rollover. A player securing a ball while on the floor cannot attempt to stand up unless that player starts a dribble. A player in this situation may also pass, shoot, or call a timeout. If the player is flat on his or her back, it is a legal play for that player to sit up but not begin to stand up.

A **fumble** is the accidental loss of player control when the ball is unintentionally dropped or slips from a player's grasp. When a player fumbles the ball, the player is not in control of the ball, and therefore, cannot be called for a traveling violation. Any steps taken during the recovery of a fumble are not traveling, regardless of how far the ball goes.

After a player has ended a dribble and fumbled the ball, it is legal for that player to recover the ball. However, if that player begins a new dribble, a **double dribble** violation occurs. An easy way to remember this rule is as follows – it is *legal* to fumble-dribble-fumble and *illegal* to dribble-fumble-dribble.

A player who fumbles the ball after receiving a pass may legally start a dribble.

Palming or carrying the ball occurs when the ball comes to rest in the player's hand and the player dribbles a second time. There is no restriction as to how high a player may bounce the ball, provided the ball does not come to rest in a player's hand and the hand stays above the ball.

Try For Goal

A player who attempts a try for goal and misses the basket (shoots an air ball), can retrieve his/her own missed attempt. It is then legal for that player to start another dribble or attempt another try for goal.

A player has their attempted try for goal blocked while the ball is in the player's hand. The player then returns to the floor with the ball. This player has not traveled. A **jump ball** has occurred and play will resume with the alternating possession arrow.

A player who has released their try for goal, had their try for goal blocked back into their hands and then lands on the playing court with the ball has not traveled and a jump ball has not occurred. In this situation, a legal block shot has occurred and the player can now start a new dribble, shoot or pass the ball.



"Making A Difference In The Game"

CENTRAL CONNECTICUT BOARD #6

of

Approved Basketball Officials

One Rule + One Mechanic + One Interpretation = the Board #6 Way

Throw-Ins

A player **inbounding** the ball may step on, but not over the 2-inch out-of-bounds line. During a designated spot throw-in, the player inbounding the ball must keep one foot on or over the three-foot wide **designated spot**. An inbounding player is allowed to jump or move one or both feet. A player inbounding the ball may move backward as far as space allows. If player moves outside the three-foot wide designated spot, it is a **throw-in violation**, not traveling. In gymnasiums with limited space outside the sidelines and endlines, a defensive player may be asked to step back no more than three feet. A player inbounding the ball may bounce the ball on the out-of-bounds area prior to making a throwin.

The defender may not break the **imaginary plane** during a **throw-in**. If the defender breaks the imaginary plane during a throw-in, the defender's team will receive a **warning**, or if the team has already been warned for one of the four delay situations, this action would result in a **team technical foul**. If the defender contacts the ball after breaking the imaginary plane, it is a **player technical foul** and a team warning will be recorded. If the defender fouls the inbounding player after breaking the imaginary plane, it is an **intentional personal foul**, and a team warning will be recorded.

The **inbounding player** does not have a plane restriction as does the defender, but has five seconds to release the ball and it must come directly onto the court.

If a player's momentum carries him/her off the court, he or she can be the first player to touch the ball after returning **inbounds**. That player must not have left the court voluntarily and must immediately return inbounds. It is not necessary to have both feet back inbounds – one is sufficient assuming the other foot is not out-of-bounds.

It is legal for a **throw-in** to be deflected, tipped, or batted by an offensive player in the frontcourt to an offensive player in the backcourt and no violation occurs.

It is legal during a **throw-in** for a defensive player to jump from his or her frontcourt, secure control of the ball with both feet off the floor, and return to the floor with one or both feet in the backcourt. The player may make a normal landing and it makes no difference whether the first foot down is in the frontcourt or the backcourt.

Screens

If a **screen** is set out of view of a stationary defender, the defender must be given one normal step to change direction and attempt to avoid contact. If a screen is set on a moving defender, the defender gets a minimum of one step and a maximum of two steps, depending on the speed and distance of the defender.



CENTRAL CONNECTICUT BOARD #6 of Approved Basketball Officials

"Making A Difference In The Game"

One Rule + One Mechanic + One Interpretation = the Board #6 Way

Fouls

The hand is considered part of the ball when the hand is in contact with the ball. This includes holding, dribbling, passing, or even during a try for goal. Striking a ball handler or a shooter on that player's hand is incidental contact and not a foul, no matter how loud it sounds.

“Reaching-in” is not a foul. There must be contact to have a foul. If contact does occur, it’s either a **holding foul** or an **illegal use of hands foul**. When a player, in order to stop the clock, does not make a legitimate play for the ball, holds, pushes or grabs away from the ball, or uses undue roughness, the foul is an **intentional foul**.

“Over-the-back” is not a foul. There must be contact to have a foul. A taller player may often be able to get a rebound over a shorter player, even if the shorter player has good rebounding position. If the shorter player is displaced, then a pushing foul must be called. A rebounding player, with an inside position, while boxing out, is not allowed to push back or displace an opponent, which is a **pushing foul**.

A defensive player does not have to remain stationary to take a **charging foul**. A defender may turn away or duck to absorb contact, provided he or she has already established **legal guarding position**, which are both feet on the playing court and facing the opponent. The defender can always move backwards or sideways to maintain a legal guarding position and may even have one or both feet off the playing court when contact occurs. That player may legally **rise vertically**. If the defender is moving forward, then the contact is caused by the defender, which is a **blocking foul**.

The fact that contact occurs does not constitute a foul and may be viewed as **incidental contact**. Contact, which occurs unintentionally in an effort by an opponent to reach a loose ball, or contact which may result when opponents are in equally favorable positions to perform normal defensive or offensive moves, should not be considered illegal, even though the contact may be severe.

Three, Five And Ten Second Violations

An offensive player cannot stay within the free throw lane area for more than **three seconds**. Allowance shall be made for a player who, having been in the restricted area for less than three seconds, dribbles in or moves immediately to try for goal. There is no three-second count after the release for a try for goal. A new 3-second count begins when the offensive player retrieves a missed attempt for goal.

The offensive team has **ten seconds** to move the ball from the backcourt to the frontcourt area. A ten-second count continues in the backcourt when the defense deflects or bats the ball in the backcourt but does not control the ball. When a **dribbler** is advancing the ball into the frontcourt, the ball maintains backcourt status until both feet and the ball touch entirely in the frontcourt.

The **closely guarded** rule is in effect in frontcourt only, when a defender is within six feet of the ball handler. The count continues even if defenders switch. The five-second count ends when a dribbler gets his/her head and shoulders ahead of the defender.



CENTRAL CONNECTICUT BOARD #6 of Approved Basketball Officials

"Making A Difference In The Game"

One Rule + One Mechanic + One Interpretation = the Board #6 Way

Timeouts

The **head coach** may request and be granted a timeout if his/her player is holding or dribbling the ball.

A player saving the ball from going out-of-bounds, while in possession of the ball and in the air can request and be granted a timeout.

Free Throws

There are a maximum of two offensive players and four defensive players in the **six marked free throw lane spaces**. The defense must be in both bottom spaces on all free throws. The shooter and all the players in the designated lane spaces must wait until the ball hits the ring before entering the free throw lane.

During a free throw, no opponent, including bench personnel, may **disconcert** the free thrower.

Kicking The Ball

Kicking the ball is intentionally striking it with any part of the leg or foot and is a violation. If the ball is unintentionally kicked, play shall continue regardless how far the ball travels and who recovers it.

Uniforms And Accessories

Players may not participate while wearing **jewelry**.

Headbands are legal but must be a single color. Headbands and **wristbands** must be the predominant color of the jersey or white. When wearing headbands and/or wristbands, all players must wear the same color and wear the items as intended. Only a single item may be worn on the head and/or on each wrist. Sweatbands must be worn below the elbow and be a maximum of four inches. A single headband, if worn, must be no wider than two inches.

Undershirts must be similar in color to the jersey and shall not have frayed or ragged edges.