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Basketball Comments on the Rules - 2025-26

BY NFHS ON JULY 14, 2025 | BASKETBALL, RULES



4-6-1a & b (NEW): The definition of basket interference has been expanded to include situations in which a player slaps or strikes the backboard, causing the backboard or ring to vibrate, while the ball is in a scoring position. Specifically, if the ball is touching the backboard, located on or within the basket, or within the imaginary cylinder above the basket, such contact is now considered basket interference. This revision ensures that actions which may unfairly influence the outcome of a scoring attempt — by affecting the ball's trajectory or stability of the basket — are penalized appropriately. Officials now have clearer guidance when adjudicating plays involving contact with the backboard during shot attempts.

4-22-1 & 2: The removal of offensive goaltending violations simplifies the enforcement of goaltending by eliminating the need for officials to determine whether a ball touched above the ring was a legitimate try or a pass. Previously, officials were required to interpret player intent — whether the ball was intentionally released as a try — which created inconsistencies

in enforcement. By removing offensive goaltending, the rule now places responsibility solely on the defense, streamlining decision-making and supporting the flow of play near the basket. This change may also contribute to more scoring opportunities in contested situations around the rim.

4-22-3 (NEW): A new provision clarifies that once the ball makes contact with the backboard during a shot attempt, it is automatically considered to be on its downward flight. Therefore, if a defensive player touches the ball after it has hit the backboard—and the ball still has a chance to enter the basket—a goaltending violation is to be called. This addition resolves a common area of confusion for officials, coaches, and players regarding when a ball is considered to be descending. The rule aligns with the intent of protecting legitimate shot attempts and offers a more objective standard for determining goaltending after backboard contact.

4-34-1: The definition of a “player” has been clarified to specify that a player is one of the five team members who is legally on the playing court, except during time-outs or intermissions. This clarification provides consistency in rule enforcement, especially when dealing with bench conduct and technical fouls during non-live ball situations. Previously, the distinction between players and other team personnel during stoppages was unclear, leading to inconsistencies in the application of penalties. The updated definition ensures that officials can appropriately apply rules and maintain accountability for conduct, regardless of the game state.

7-5-4: This change provides a clearer, more consistent method for determining the throw-in location after a stoppage of play in the frontcourt when the ball has not gone out of bounds. Rather than relying on an imaginary line to divide the court, officials are now instructed to use the three-point arc as a visible demarcation line. The use of an established court marking reduces judgment errors and improves accuracy in administering throw-ins. This adjustment also enhances game flow and allows teams to better understand and anticipate throw-in positioning following violations, fouls, or other stoppages.

9-2-12 & 9-3-4 (NEW): A new rule addresses scenarios in which a thrower deliberately or deceptively delays returning to the court after stepping out of bounds and then becomes the first to touch the ball upon re-entry. Previously penalized with a technical foul, this action is now considered a violation, aligning the penalty with other similar out-of-bounds infractions. This revision lowers the severity of the penalty, encouraging more consistent and frequent enforcement by officials. It also deters deceptive tactics that could provide an unfair advantage, while preserving the fairness and integrity of the game.

10-4-4b: This revision prohibits a player from intentionally contacting the backboard or ring in a manner that interferes with a scoring attempt or provides an unfair advantage. Such contact, whether during a field goal attempt or as part of a deceptive play, is now explicitly penalized with a technical foul. This change reinforces the importance of maintaining the integrity of scoring opportunities and aligns enforcement with the overall principle of fair play. The clarification assists officials in penalizing unsporting behavior that impacts the outcome of a play near the basket.



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