



**NFHS BASKETBALL  
COMMENTS ON THE 2010-11 RULES REVISIONS**

**CONCUSSION PROCEDURE REVISED (2-8-5; 3-3-8):** Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion must be immediately removed from the game and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional. The previous rule directed officials to remove an athlete from play if “unconscious or apparently unconscious.” The previous rule also allowed for return to play based on written authorization by a medical doctor. The new rule requires that any player who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion, such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems, shall be immediately removed from play and shall not return until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional. Officials, coaches and administrators should be looking for signs of concussion in all athletes and should immediately remove any suspected concussed athlete from play and make every effort to ensure a concussed athlete does not continue to participate.

**LIST OF LEGAL HEAD/WRISTBAND COLORS EXPANDED (3-5-3a):** In 2008-09 the rules stated headbands and wristbands must be a single solid color of white, black, beige or a color similar to the torso of the jersey. The rule has been revised to state that headbands and wristbands shall be white, black, beige or a single solid school color, provided all team members are wearing the same color for each item for all participants. This rule change will now allow team members to wear headbands and wristbands of school colors.

**PLAYERS AND TEAM MEMBERS REQUIRED TO REMAIN ON THE COURT/IN THE BENCH AREA WHILE THE GAME IS IN PROGRESS (10-3-6i; 10-5-5):** A player leaving the court for an unauthorized reason to demonstrate resentment, disgust or intimidation will be added to the list of unsporting behaviors by a player with a technical foul penalty assessed. The committee hopes this rules change will further reduce the likelihood of individual players demonstrating unsporting behavior. In addition, a similar rule will be added requiring team members to remain on the court and in the bench area while the game is in progress until each quarter or extra period has officially ended. This includes free-throw attempts by an opponent with no time remaining on the clock. Since the Head Coach is ultimately responsible for the conduct of all team members, the penalty will be a technical foul assessed directly to the Head Coach.

## 2010-11 POINTS OF EMPHASIS

1. **RULES ENFORCEMENT.** There appears to be continued movement away from consistent enforcement of NFHS playing rules. Personal interpretations of the rules by individual officials have a negative impact on the game. The rules are written to provide a balance between offense and defense, minimize risk to participants, promote the sound tradition of the game and promote fair play. Individual philosophies and deviations from the rules as they are written and interpreted by the NFHS, negatively impact the basic tenets and fundamentals of the game. Illegal tactics that are permitted – are promoted. When officials allow players to use illegal tactics without penalty, the behavior is condoned and consequently encouraged. When officials consistently enforce the playing rules as intended, players and coaches are able to make the proper adjustments – promoting skill development and a level playing field.
2. **SPORTING BEHAVIOR.** Teams entering the gymnasium prior to the contest should not run through the area occupied by the opposing team or under the basket where opponents are warming up. Teams should only enter, jog and warm up on their half of the court. Gatherings intended to motivate a team after the warm-up period, during or following player introductions and post-game celebrations should be performed in the area directly in front of the team bench. If during the pre-game or half-time warm-up period one team leaves the floor, the other team may not use the entire court; teams may only warm up on their half of the court. Only authorized personnel (cheerleaders, athletic trainers, managers, administrators, etc.) should be permitted on the floor; all spectators should be in designated areas.
3. **PERIMETER PLAY.** Two illegal actions are taking place on the perimeter of the court that are particularly problematic. First, defensive players are illegally using their hands to “check” the ball handler/dribbler. Secondly, offensive players are palming the ball to elude the defender. Both of these illegal tactics are going uncalled, which in turn, promotes further illegal actions (see Point of Emphasis #1).
  - A. **Hand checking.**
    - 1) Hand checking is any tactic using the hands or arms that allows a player, on offense or defense, to control (hold, impede, push, divert, slow or prevent) the movement of an opposing player.
    - 2) Hand checking is a foul and is not incidental contact.
    - 3) Defensive players shall not have hand(s) on the offensive player. When a player has a hand on, two hands on or jabs a hand or forearm on an opponent, it is a foul.
    - 4) When a player contacts an opponent with his or her hands as an aid in starting, stopping, driving around, defending a screen, controlling or anticipating the

opponent's next move, it is a foul. Players may not place their hands on an opponent with or without the ball.

- 5) Much of the roughness in the interscholastic game today is a direct result of not assessing the proper penalty when illegal contact with the hand(s) occurs.

**B. Palming.**

- 1) When the hand is in contact with the ball and the palm of the hand is beyond the perpendicular position (more than a handshake), tilted in a skyward position so the ball has come to rest on the hand, the dribble has ended.
- 2) When the player then pushes the ball to the floor, he or she is starting another dribble (illegal dribble), which is a violation.

4. **CLOSELY-GUARDED SITUATIONS.** Well officiated closely-guarded situations provide for better balance between offense and defense. When closely-guarded rules are not followed, there is a significant advantage for the offense. The following areas are to be emphasized:

A. **Rule basics.** A closely-guarded situation occurs when a player in control of the ball in his or her team's frontcourt, is guarded by an opponent who is within 6 feet of the player who is holding or dribbling the ball; the defensive player must obtain a legal guarding position. A player shall not hold the ball for five seconds or dribble the ball for five seconds while closely guarded in his or her frontcourt. A player can legally hold the ball while closely guarded for four seconds, dribble the ball for four seconds and hold the ball again for four seconds before violating.

B. **Measuring 6 feet.** Officials must define and have a clear image of the 6-foot guarding distance necessary. Too frequently, officials require the defensive player to be within 3 to 4 feet prior to the count being initiated. Good visual examples of this distance can be found on the court as: the distance between the free-throw line and the top of the semi-circle; from the division line to the jump circle; two adjacent marked lane spaces. Failure to properly judge the 6-foot distance and require the defender to be within 3 or 4 feet of the dribbler before beginning the count puts the defensive player in an unfair position.

C. **Ending the count.** A closely-guarded count ends when no defensive player is within 6 feet. The count also stops when a closely-guarded player: completes a dribble anywhere in the team's own frontcourt; starts a dribble in the team's own frontcourt and ends it anywhere in the frontcourt (a new five-second count will start if the player holds the ball); loses possession of the ball for any reason in the team's own frontcourt; or has his or her dribble interrupted. If a closely-guarded player beats the defender(s) by getting head and shoulders past the defensive player, the count has ended.

- D. **Multiple defenders.** The count should continue even if there is a defensive switch, provided the 6-foot distance is maintained. There is no requirement for the defensive player to remain the same during the count as long as the offensive player is closely guarded throughout.
  - E. **Counting mechanics.** The official begins a visible count when the 6-foot distance is established and must switch arms when going directly from one counting situation to another.
5. **PRINCIPLE OF VERTICALITY.** The committee is concerned that the principle of verticality is not being applied consistently, especially in situations that involve blocked shots. Verticality applies to a legal position. The following are the basic components of the principle of verticality:
- A. Legal guarding must be obtained initially and movement thereafter must be legal.
  - B. For this position, the defender may rise or jump vertically and occupy the space within his or her vertical plane.
  - C. The hands and arms of the defender may be raised within his/her vertical plane while on the floor or in the air.
  - D. The defender should not be penalized for leaving the floor vertically or having his/her hands and arms extended within his or her vertical plane.
  - E. The offensive player, whether on the floor or airborne, may not “clear out” or cause contact within the defender’s vertical plane; this is a foul.
  - F. The defender may not “belly up” or use the lower part of the body or arms to cause contact outside his or her vertical plane; this is a foul.
  - G. The player with the ball is to be given no more protection or consideration than the defender in judging which player has violated the rules.
  - H. Misunderstanding of this rule generally results in the defensive player being charged with a foul when actually his or her vertical plane has likely been violated.