



# Principles Of Contact In Wheelchair Basketball 2011

Version 2011 V 16.1

This 2011 edition contains only minor updates to the 2010 Edition

By

## Ross Dewell

- Educational Resources Officer 1999 – 2011 for the IWBF Asia - Oceania Zone Technical Committee
- Member of IWBF Technical Committee 1994 – 1998
- IWBF Referee 1986 - 2007

Ross Dewell wrote the text of **Rule 8 Personal Fouls** in the official **1998 - 2002 IWBF Official Wheelchair Basketball Rules** – now slightly revised as **Rule Six** in the current rulebook



Forewords by:

**Maureen Orchard** Secretary General, IWBF

**Norbert Kucera** President, IWBF Technical Commission

**Greg Love** Secretary General  
IWBF Asia-Oceania Zone



## Introduction To The 2011 Edition

The 2010 edition of *Principles Of Contact In Wheelchair Basketball* was the first major re-organisation of this book since the first edition was released in 1996. The 2011 edition of this work has now become a reference book. This 2011 edition contains many excellent photographs by Kevin Bogetti-Smith and Matthew Wells that assist my colour drawings to illustrate PATH theory. There are some new readings in the Appendix.

Most importantly, **there is no change whatsoever** to the basic principles of PATH. The **1998** Path Theory principles adopted by IWBF are exactly the same as the **2011** Path Theory principles. Everything in this book is 100% in accord with the contact rules which I first wrote, based upon Path Theory, for the **1998-2002 IWBF Official Basketball Rules**. *Path Theory* is now firmly established as the basis for the contact rules of IWBF wheelchair basketball. The IWBF contact rules and the contact principles described in this new edition of *Principles of Contact* **remain in total accord**.

This 2011 edition is the latest version of a project that I began in the 1980s. I distributed the *First Edition* of this book in 1996 at the Atlanta Paralympic Games. I followed this by writing the contact rules in the IWBF *Official Wheelchair Basketball Rules 1998-2002* rulebook for the IWBF Technical Commission. My new rules defined fouls and contact for the first time using the terms and principles of *Path Theory*. They described wheelchair basketball contact situations in wheelchair-specific terms.

*Path Theory* first recognised that contact involving **moving** players could be described in **five** basic situations:

- **Converging Paths** two opponents travelling in straight lines at an acute angle towards the same point
- **Square On** a player travelling at right angles towards an opponent
- **Head On** a player travelling head on towards an opponent
- **Curving Paths** a player moving in a curving path with an opponent locked chair to chair.
- **Pivoting** a stationary player who pivots into the *Path* of a moving opponent



I developed the concepts of Path Theory during the 1980s from two sources – firstly, from reading, and discussing with him, the early papers about contact in wheelchair basketball written and co-written by Dr Horst Strohkendl for the ISMG Basketball Section; and secondly, from new basic principles of contact theory that I developed on my own in Australia during the 1970's, independently of the ISMG. I called these new principles *Path Theory*.

I developed *Path Theory* as a more comprehensive and complete way of interpreting Dr Strohkendl's descriptions of contact situations as they applied to the modern game. I used Path Theory to describe many common contact situations which had not been accurately defined in the IWBF basketball rules.

**Horst Strohkendl**

Today, Path Theory continues to provide within a consistent and cohesive theoretical framework a refined and clear definition of what a player must do to establish a legal position in all of the common play situations. Path Theory remains sound in the face of all recent changes to the rules, and in the face of all of the modern developments in wheelchair design and technology that have changed the nature of play in our great game. The principles of Path Theory have survived all of these changes with no anomalies or exceptions. Path Theory remains as solid now as it was when I first introduced it to IWBF in 1996.

As with previous editions, this 2011 edition provides in the Appendix many articles for supplementary reading, including some new articles. These articles are based upon the accumulated knowledge I gained over four decades of officiating wheelchair basketball in Australia and at numerous ISMG and IWBF World Championships and Paralympic Games. This book presumes that the reader is familiar with the FIBA principles of contact.

Readers who are new to wheelchair basketball might find that a good way to start this book is to read the article in the Appendix called *The PATH Theory of Contact – Some General Principles*. This article gives a basic overview of wheelchair contact principles.

Enjoy the book.

I welcome your comments, questions and suggestions.

## Ross Dewell

**B. Ed Studies (Newcastle), OAM.**  
**September 2011**



## Foreword

# Maureen Orchard

## IWBF Secretary General



Ross Dewell is to be congratulated for the work that has gone into completing the latest edition of "*Principles of Contact in Wheelchair Basketball*".

In the 1980s Ross realised that wheelchair basketball needed a more complete analysis of this important aspect of our game and thanks to his foresight and hard work we have an excellent tool to teach new referees these very important contact principles.

His fellow referees, coaches and players refer to his work when they want to discuss contact or argue a call. IWBF is fortunate to have someone with Ross's background in officiating and teaching and the zeal to maintain an accurate model when changes to the rules occur.

Ross has worked with his colleague, Australian referee Matt Wells, to create an animated digital version of the Contact Book to better illustrate the principles outlined in the book. This resource can be found at:

<http://www.wellsm.com/iwbf>

I would like to express my thanks to Ross for his dedication to providing accurate teaching aids to our sport.



## Maureen Orchard

Secretary General  
IWBF



## Foreword

**Norbert Kucera**

**President,  
IWBF Technical Commission**



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It is an honour and pleasure for me as President of the Technical Commission to write the Foreword to Ross Dewell's book "*Principles of Contact in Wheelchair Basketball*".

This new, totally revised edition is not only an even more professional work; it contains additional, very important and revealing supplements.

This major work that Ross Dewell presents to our sport is as a very practical and usable handbook – in fact, a necessity – when considering the basics of the contact rules. It provides a very helpful and clear explanation of wheelchair contact for all people already involved in this sport, even up to the highest levels.

In the wording and the presentation of the book, the reader will sense the highly regarded practical experience of Ross Dewell as a national and international referee for more than two decades. The reader also will enjoy the pedagogical horizon in theory and education of Ross Dewell as a professional educator.

The "Path Theory" which Ross introduced in the first edition of his book was the basis for the contact rules in the 1998-2002 IWBF rulebook. This shows the high regard held for his work for wheelchair basketball. It is really simple to follow the guidelines that the book provides – but don't think that it was so easy to formulate them. Still more, the book verbalises a "feeling" for legal and an illegal contact and gives clear ideas how to observe this! Ross has achieved this, and I am very happy that the former President of the Technical Commission, Dr. Tip Thiboutot, supported the original development of this book, as a step forward for both our game and the understanding of our sport.

Wheelchair basketball is becoming more and more athletic as the speed of the game increases. The dynamic play is becoming more spectacular as high-tech wheelchairs enable perfect performance of skills and wheelchair handling by the players. This makes it really tough for referees who have just fractions of a second to make the correct decision about who is responsible when contact between players occurs. This book is an absolute help for everyone - for officials, coaches and players.

I encourage them all to read this book!



**Norbert Kucera**

**President  
IWBF Technical Commission**



## Foreword

**Greg Love**

**Secretary General  
IWBF Asia-Oceania Zone**



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Ross Dewell has been involved with wheelchair basketball refereeing at the top level in Australia since 1971 and as an international referee since 1986. His contribution to refereeing and the technical aspects of international wheelchair basketball (IWBF) is as significant as was Dr. John Bunn's work for NCAA and FIBA in the late fifties.

Originally and going back to 1986, Ross was very concerned that a definitive text dealing with contact was needed in Australia to assist referees who in many cases were isolated from the mainstream of IWBF basketball. The project however evolved into one of assisting referees, players and coaches throughout the world.

Since the first edition of this book was published, Ross has had an ongoing commitment to upgrade the text and illustrations as the IWBF contact rules have been further defined. In fact to a large degree Ross has been of influence in helping the further defining of the rules process.

During the four years that that Ross was a member of the IWBF Technical Commission, his major project was to guide the rewriting of the contact section of the IWBF Rule Book. His simple premise was that *'if Player B had time to get there, then his opponent Player A had an equal chance to avoid contact'*. Drawing on IWBF and FIBA references, Ross continues to prove that premise to be true.

It is with great pleasure that I recommend the book and the on-line version to officials and players who wish guidance to go forward within the game.



**Greg Love**

**AOZ – IWBF Secretary General**



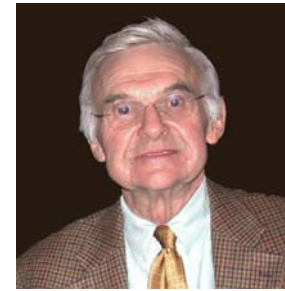
## Acknowledgements



**Greg Love**

I would like to restate once again my thanks to two colleagues: **Greg Love** of Australia and the former IWBF Technical Commission Chairman, **Dr Armand "Tip" Thiboutot** of the U.S.A.

Their assistance, support and great patience over a long period during my writing of the first edition of this book in the 1990s was invaluable.



**Tip Thiboutot**

Greg and Tip constantly examined and challenged the theory during its early years of development. This strengthened the final outcome. Greg provided many suggestions, and offered constructive criticism of the text during the preparation of the first draft of the first edition of this book that I released for the first time in 1996 at the Atlanta Paralympic Games. I leaned heavily on Tip's eagle eye for detail in the proof-reading and editing of the final draft. Thank you both for your support, perceptive comments, constructive criticisms and unending patience.

Greg often reminds me that I started this *Principles of Contact* project years ago late one night around the table in his kitchen in Adelaide, sometime in the 1980s. We pushed pizza boxes representing wheelchairs around the table top and we talked till the early hours discussing wheelchair positioning, time and distance and responsibility for contact and the relevance of the FIBA principles of contact to wheelchairs. It was during that discussion that the idea came to me of describing contact situations in wheelchairs in terms of the path of the wheelchair. Thus, during that late night discussion, PATH THEORY was born. It took me a couple of years after that night to think it all through before I started to write it down. What resulted was the release in 1996 of the first edition of *Principles Of Contact In Wheelchair Basketball*.

Finally, thanks to my colleagues, IWBF officials Matt Wells and Mark Flanagan, for their input into the editing of the 2010 illustrated edition of *Principles of Contact*, and to Matt Wells in particular for the use of his excellent photographs.

## Ross Dewell September 2011

### PHOTOS

Every effort has been made to locate and credit the source of photos. If any photo acknowledgement has been incorrectly attributed, please contact me – Ross Dewell - see *contact details below*

- **Thanks to Sports and Spokes** magazine for permission to use photos © *Paralyzed Veterans of America, Sports 'n Spokes*.
- **Thanks to Matthew Wells** for permission to use his great action photos and photo sequences taken for IWBF. Matt's outstanding photos can be seen on the IWBF website.
- Thanks to the Editor, *Basketball News* for the use of photos.
- **Thanks to Kevin Bogetti-Smith** and to Jody Kingsbury of *Wheelchair Basketball Canada* for permission to use Kevin's amazing photos – the best I have seen.

Readers should visit [wheelchairbasketball.ca](http://wheelchairbasketball.ca) to view more of Kevin's great photos.



Cover Photo: Courtesy of Canadian Wheelchair Basketball and Kevin Bogetti-Smith Photography. Used with permission.

## Contact Details: Ross Dewell

Questions and comments about Path Theory as described in this book can be directed to the author:  
**Email:** [ross\\_dewell@optusnet.com.au](mailto:ross_dewell@optusnet.com.au) .. or ... [ross\\_dewell@hotmail.com](mailto:ross_dewell@hotmail.com)

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## ADDITIONAL PUBLICATIONS

### QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE TO CONTACT IN WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL 2011

The **Quick Reference Guide To Wheelchair Contact** is an 8 page summary of **Principles of Contact In Wheelchair Basketball**.

The book describes the basic principles of PATH THEORY.

It does not contain the casebook examples or the Appendices.

It is not a replacement for the more comprehensive *Principles of Contact In Wheelchair Basketball*.

### WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL REFEREES COURSE

This course is designed to teach qualified basketball referees to referee wheelchair basketball.

The course covers the rules and the mechanics of refereeing wheelchair basketball.

The course was written for IWBF-AOZ in my capacity as IWBF-AOZ Educational Resources Officer.

### 2 MAN and 3 MAN PRE-GAME CONFERENCE CARDS for IWBF Wheelchair Basketball Officials

For a free **.pdf** copy by email of any of these publications, contact Ross Dewell.

**Email:** [ross\\_dewell@hotmail.com](mailto:ross_dewell@hotmail.com) **OR** [ross\\_dewell@optusnet.com.au](mailto:ross_dewell@optusnet.com.au)

### IWBF Basketball Rules: **Rule 6: Personal Fouls - and Principles of Contact 2011.**

Ross Dewell wrote the entire text of **Rule Eight Personal Fouls** for the **1998- 2002 IWBF Official Basketball Rules** – now slightly revised as **Rule Six** in the current rulebook to incorporate new FIBA wording and numbering.

That 1998 contact rules revision was based entirely on the principles of PATH Theory.

From 1998 onwards, the contact rules and contact principles in IWBF basketball have been, and remain, based on the theories and principles of contact described in *Principles of Contact In Wheelchair Basketball*.

I have pointed this out to assure readers that all situations described in this text are entirely consistent with **Rule 6 Personal Fouls** in the **IWBF Official Wheelchair Basketball Rules**.

**- Ross Dewell**

## Animations - Wheelchair Principles of Contact



**Matthew Wells**

I recommend to readers that they visit the excellent resource created by my colleague and friend, Australian IWBF referee **Matthew Wells**.

Matthew has animated many of the illustrations from earlier editions of this book.

This outstanding resource can be found on the internet at:

<http://www.wellsm.com/iwbf>

# Contents

## Page

## Topic

### GUARDING MOVING PLAYERS

A.1	Definitions: Path, Braking Distance and Braking Area, Covering The Path.
B.1	Legal Defence
C.1	Closing The Gap
D.1	Converging Paths
E.1	Crossing The Path
F.1	Head-On Collisions
G.1	Curving Paths
H.1	Pivotting

### GUARDING STATIONARY OPPONENTS

I.1	Guarding Stationary Opponents
J.1	Screening
K.1	The Act Of Shooting
L.1	Summary - Principles of Contact

### APPENDIX: SUPPLEMENTARY READING

*All articles in this section were written by Ross Dewell*

M.2	Chair Dimensions and <i>Covering The Path</i>
N.1	The PATH Theory of Contact - Some General Principles
O.1	Time and Distance
P.1	Guarding Situations - The Responsibilities Of The Player With The Ball and the Defender
Q.2	Legal Defence - Is There A Need To Stop?
R.2	Awareness and Contact
S.1	When Is There No Difference In The Rules For On-ball and Off-ball Contact?
T.1	The Difference Between IWBF and FIBA Contact Rules?
U.1	Disability and Classification Points
V.1	Experienced Referees Know More Than Just The Rules
W.1	Quick Quiz

**Note:** All references to rules articles refer to the ***IWBF Official Basketball Rules for Men and Women*** other than where reference is made to the ***FIBA Official Basketball Rules***

## COPYRIGHT NOTICE

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Copies of ***IWBF Official Wheelchair Basketball Rules for Men and Women*** can be obtained by downloading the documentation directly from the IWBF website.....

<http://www.iwbf.org/>



## Section A

# Definitions

1. Path
2. Braking Distance and Braking Area
3. Covering The Path



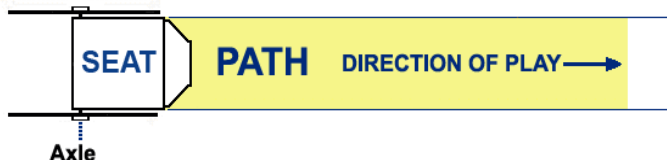
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## DEFINITIONS

### 1. PATH

The wheelchair and its path

Figure A.1



- A player's path is the area between the parallels drawn from either side of a player's chair from the side seat rails in the direction the chair is travelling - (see Figure A.1)
- The width of a player's path equals the **width of the seat** of the player's chair - (see Figure A.2)  
Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33

Original photo by Matthew Wells for IWBF. Used by permission -  
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Figure A.2



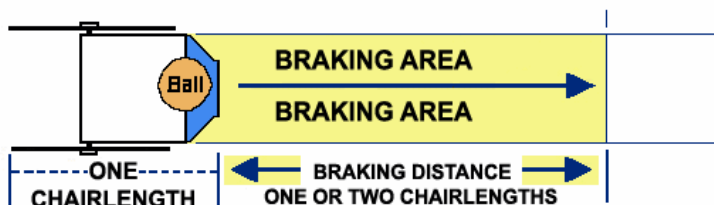
#### Comment:

The width of the seat of the wheelchair remains consistent over time, even with the development of new chair designs and new chair structures.

This means that the definition of PATH remains consistent over time.

### 2. BRAKING DISTANCE and BRAKING AREA

Figure A.3



It is very important to understand these two terms:

#### BRAKING DISTANCE

The **Braking Distance** is the **distance** that a moving player needs in order to be able to stop.  
The **distance required to stop** depends upon the speed that the chair is travelling.  
The **distance required to stop** is never more than two chair lengths.

#### BRAKING AREA

The **Braking Area** is the **floor area** needed by the moving wheelchair to stop.  
It is the area of the player's path immediately in front of the wheelchair.

(continued ..)

Definitions (continued ..)

### 3. COVERING THE PATH

This is the most important concept that you need to understand about defence against the player with the ball in wheelchair basketball.

#### (a) LEGAL POSITION v THE PLAYER WITH THE BALL

**Covering the path** refers to the action of a player (*Red 4 in Figure A.4*) who positions his chair across the path of an opponent (*Blue 6 in Figure A.4*) so that the covering chair extends from one side of the path of the opponent across to the other side of the path.

Figure A.4:



The path can be covered with any part of the wheelchair, including the rear wheels.

If a player has *covered the path* of an opponent, he has established a legal position.

Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.3.

In this photo, the defender BLUE 11 has covered the path of WHITE 9.

This is not the only way to establish legal defence against the player with the ball. There are two things the defender can do to establish legal position in relation to **an opponent who has the ball**:

To establish a legal position in relation to **an opponent who has the ball**, a defender must either:

- (a) Cover the path of the opponent
- or
- (b) Give the opponent time and distance to avoid contact.

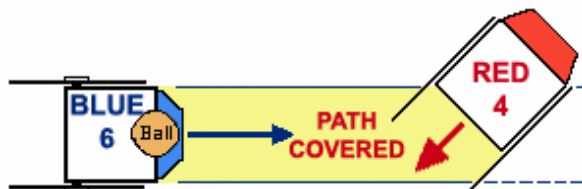


Original photo by Matthew Wells for IWBF. Used by permission.

Added graphic by Ross Dewell.

#### (b) WHEELING IN BACKWARDS TO COVER THE PATH

Figure A.5: Covering the Path



Players can wheel in backwards to *cover the path*.

In *Figure A.5*, defender Red 4 has wheeled in backwards to legally *cover the path* of opponent Blue 6 who has the ball.

#### DOES A LEGAL POSITION MEAN FACING THE OPPONENT?

In FIBA basketball, the defender who reaches a legal position in the path of an opponent who has the ball is usually required to be facing that opponent. That is not the case in IWBF basketball. The wheelchair defender has only to occupy a legal position first, on or off the ball. Which direction his chair is facing is not relevant.

## Section B

# Legal Defence

Two Basic Guarding Situations:

1. Guarding The Player Who *Controls* The Ball
  2. Guarding An Opponent Who *Does Not Control* The Ball
- Stationary Defence
  - Moving Defence



*Photo by Matthew Wells for IWBF. Used by permission.*

## GUARDING: TWO BASIC SITUATIONS

In IWBF basketball, contact is divided into **Guarding** (action by the Defence) and **Screening** (action by the Offence).

For the DEFENCE, the contact rules describe TWO basic *Guarding* situations. These are:

1. **Guarding The Player Who Controls The Ball** (IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.4)
2. **Guarding A Player Who Does Not Control The Ball** (IWBF Rulebook- Article 33.5)

There are different rules and responsibilities for contact for the **defender** in each of these two basic situations. *Note: The offensive player who controls the ball also has a responsibility to avoid contact.*

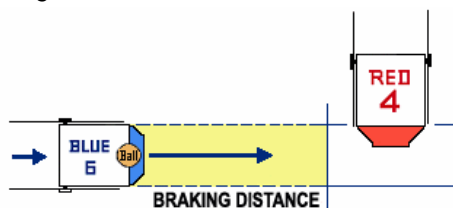
### FIRST SITUATION: GUARDING THE PLAYER WHO CONTROLS THE BALL

- To establish a legal position in relation to **an opponent who has the ball**, a defender must either:
  - (a) *Cover the path* of the opponent ..... or ..... (b) Give the opponent time and distance to avoid contact.

*Figure B.1: Path covered*



*Figure B2: Time to avoid contact*



- If a defender has *covered the path* of the **player who has the ball**, the defender is considered to have given **the player who has the ball** time to avoid contact. This concept is described by the following principle: ...

***If Player B had time to establish a legal position in the path of opponent Player A, then that opponent Player A had an equal chance to avoid contact.***

*Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.4.1*

**NOTE:** A player may not intrude into the space occupied by an opponent's wheelchair.

For example, a player cannot push his footrest bar into or underneath an opponent's chair or in behind the front castors in order to prevent that opponent from moving. Nor can a player place his chair between the rear wheels of an opponent. To cause contact by doing any of these things may result in a foul being called against the player who caused the contact.

### LEGAL POSITION v THE PLAYER WITH THE BALL -

#### *Time And Distance To Avoid Contact*

- In addition to *covering the path*, a **defender** can establish a legal position in the path of **the player with the ball** by stopping in the ball carrier's path and allowing the ball carrier time and distance to avoid contact, even though the defender has **not** covered the path of the ball carrier.
- A general guide is that the defender should allow **approximately one chair length** for the ball carrier to avoid contact if the ball carrier is travelling slowly, or **no more than two chair lengths** if the ball carrier is travelling quickly. This **distance** required for the ball carrier to stop is called the **braking distance**.
- The distance required for a moving player to stop varies according to his speed. (*Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Articles 33.4.1*)

### MAINTAINING A LEGAL POSITION WHILE MOVING

The concept of *COVERING THE PATH* allows a player, after having covered an opponent's path, to move in order to **maintain** his legal position in that opponent's path. (*Reference: IWBF Rulebook – Article 33.4.3*) A similar situation exists in FIBA. (*Reference: FIBA Rulebook— Article 33.4*)

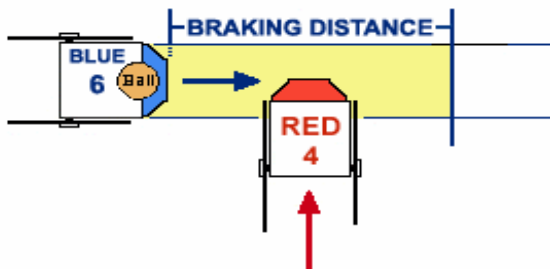
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## GUARDING SITUATIONS - CASEBOOK EXAMPLES

### Guarding The Player Who Has The Ball (*Guarding On The Ball*)

#### Example 1. *Figure B.2*



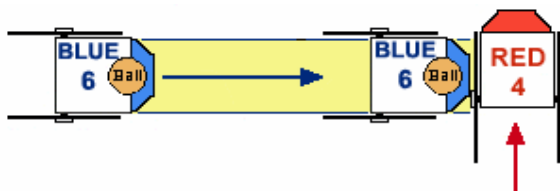
**Blue 6 has the ball.** Opponent Red 4 pushes his footrests into the path of Blue 6. Red 4 stops, without giving Blue 6 time to stop or change direction. Blue 6 crashes into Red 4.

**Decision:** Red 4 is responsible for this contact.

Red 4 has committed a Blocking foul.

Reference: *IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.4.3*

#### Example 2. *Figure B.3*



**Blue 6 has the ball.** Red 4 pushes into the path of Blue 6 and covers the path of Blue 6. Blue 6 crashes into Red 4.

**Decision:** Charging Foul by Blue 6.

Red 4 has covered the path of Blue 6.

Reference: *IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.4.3*



In this photo, WHITE 11 has covered the path of GREEN 4.

GREEN 4 has charged into WHITE 11 with such force that his rear wheels have come off the ground.

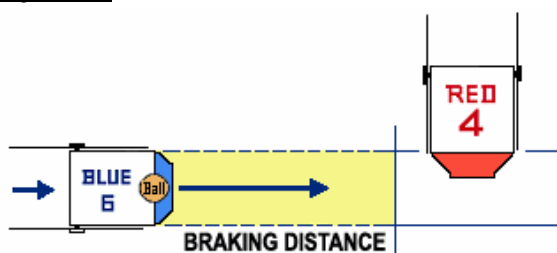
**Decision:** Charging foul on GREEN 4

Reference: *IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.4.3*

Original photo by Matthew Wells for IWBF. Used by permission.

#### Example 3. Time To Avoid Contact

*Figure B.4*



Red 4 is **stationary** 10 metres down court in the path of opponent Blue 6 well beyond the distance needed for Blue 6 to avoid contact. Red 4 has only his footrests in the path of Blue 6. Blue 6 continues to roll up court in a straight line and crashes into Red 4.

**Decision:** Pushing Foul by Blue 6, who had time to avoid contact.

References: *IWBF Rulebook - Articles 33.4.1; 33.4.3; 33.5.1.2*

**Comment:** With or without the ball, it is the responsibility of BLUE 6 to avoid contact with RED 4 who has a legal position in the path of BLUE 6. Any player, with or without the ball, who has been given time and distance to avoid contact, will be responsible for contact that results from his failure to avoid such contact.

### BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PLAYER WHO HAS THE BALL

**Question:** What must the player with the ball do when he pushes towards a defender?

**The player with the ball:**

1. Must expect that he will be guarded. (Reference: *IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.4.2*)
2. Must avoid contact with any opponent who has established a legal position in his path.
3. **Must maintain control of his chair at all times** so that he can avoid contact with legal defence.

(continued ..)

Guarding (continued .. )

## SECOND SITUATION: GUARDING AN OPPONENT WHO DOES NOT CONTROL THE BALL

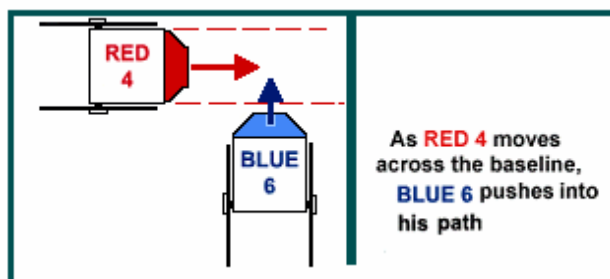
= The Official Must Decide *Who Got There First?*

1. When deciding the responsibility for contact between a defender and **an opponent who does NOT have the ball** the IWBF official must determine “**Who got there first?**”, subject to the other factors in Point 3 below.
2. In general, a player who reaches a position first before **an opponent who does NOT have the ball** is considered to have legally occupied that position. (*Reference: IWBF Rulebook – Articles 33.5.1*)
3. However, there may be other factors to consider, such as *crossing-the-path*, *head-on contact*, *screening*, *pivoting*, and whether a defender who was initially stationary has moved into the braking area of a moving opponent.

### Example: Guarding Off the Ball (Figure B.5)

Offensive player RED 4 does **NOT** have the ball. RED 4 is stationary in his front court near the baseline in the left corner His chair is parallel to the baseline, close to the restricted area, and his chair is facing into the restricted area.

Figure B.5 Neither player has the ball.



Defender BLUE 6 is stationary, facing the baseline half a chair length from the braking area of Red 4, just outside the probable path of Red 4 who is also stationary. BLUE 6 is ready to stop any baseline move by RED 4. RED 4 attempts to move between the baseline and BLUE 6. BLUE 6 pushes into the braking area of RED 4, and gets half of his chair across the path of RED 4. RED 4 crashes into the side of BLUE 6.

At the moment of contact, RED 4 has travelled about half of a chair length. Although there was initially less than a chair-length between the players, this was time for Red 4 to avoid contact – Braking distance for Red 4 was less than half a chair length because both players were not moving quickly.

### Question: Who is responsible for this contact?

**Answer:** Red 4 is responsible for contact off the ball, because Blue 6 got there first.

In basketball terms, BLUE 6 ‘got there first’. RED 4 has attempted to enter a spot already occupied by an opponent. Off ball principle = who got there first? (*Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.5.1*) Remember, neither player had the ball. If this contact was slight, the officials may decide to make no call.

But there are two other possibilities. A final decision in *Figure B.4* will depend upon how the official reads this play....

- When considering blocking and *Wheelchair tripping off-ball*, officials must be aware who reached position first. Around the restricted area, especially in a zone defence, this will often be a *no call*, when neither player is placed at a disadvantage. Officials and players *do* need to be aware of the conditions of *article 33.5.3 (wheelchair tripping)* in this situation. However, the reality is that it is unlikely that *article 33.5.3* would be applicable here. The players do not usually generate enough speed in these confined areas around the restricted area to make *article 33.5.3* applicable. Braking distances may frequently be very short because in a confined space, little speed is possible. Around the restricted area area in a zone defence, the chairs manoeuvre for position and defenders close small gaps without a whistle being needed.

**Comment:** *Around the restricted area, contact of this type is common. Cutters push towards small gaps that are quickly closed by defenders. Because there is little room to build up speed, the cutters can see the gap disappearing and usually have time to stop or avoid contact. The contact that may occur here when the cutter bumps the defender may often be regarded as incidental, with no-call made, if the players were working reasonably within the rules. Officials need to be aware of advantage/disadvantage. Fouls do occur and officials must be alert for significant illegal contact, such as illegal blocking and holding of cutters.*

(continued .. )

Guarding (continued ...)

## MOVING FORWARDS OR MOVING BACKWARDS TO COVER-THE-PATH: IS THERE A DIFFERENCE IN THE RULES FOR THIS?

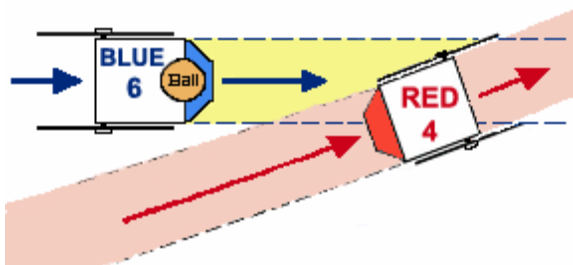
An opponent can wheel in **backwards** to establish a legal position but he must fulfil the same requirements as if he had moved in forwards, i.e. ....

- He must get there first before an opponent who does not have the ball.
  - He must either *cover the path* of the ball carrier, or allow time and distance to avoid contact.
- (see *Figure B.5* below).

When *covering-the-path*, there is **NO** physical difference in the distance travelled by moving **forwards** to establish legal position compared to moving **backwards** to establish legal position. For example, he can *cover-the-path* of the ball carrier by wheeling across the path backwards.

### Casebook Example 1

*Figure B.6* Converging Paths



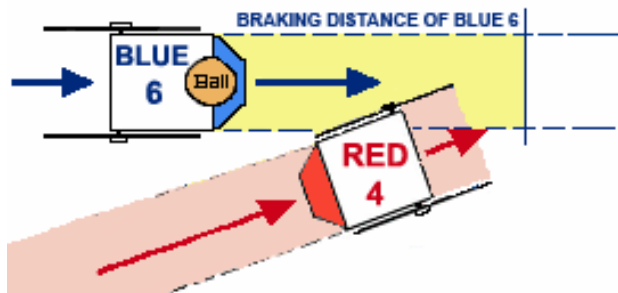
Defender Red 4 has wheeled **backwards** on a converging path into the path of Blue 6 who has the ball. Red 4 has wheeled far enough to legally *cover the path* of Blue 6.

Blue 6 crashes into Red 4.

**Decision:** Red 4 has achieved legal position by covering the path of Blue 6.  
(Reference: *IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.4*)

### Casebook Example 2

*Figure B.7* Converging Paths



Defender Red 4 has wheeled **backwards** on a converging path into the path of Blue 6 who has the ball. Red 4 has wheeled far enough to get his rear axle into the path of Blue 6, but has **failed** to *cover the path* of Blue 6.

Blue 6 crashes into Red 4.

**Decision:** Blocking foul by Red 4.  
Red 4 has not *covered the path* of Blue 6.  
(Reference: *IWBF Rulebook Articles 33.3; 33.4*)

### Comments about *Figure B.7*:

- The situation in *Figure B.7* where Red 4 has moved the back of his chair marginally into the braking area of opponent Blue 6 without covering the path of Blue 6 can be compared to the situation in to FIBA basketball where a player has illegally extended an arm or leg in front of an opponent.
- In wheelchair basketball, if the illegal move by Red 4 is sudden and the resulting contact is significant, the situation may be compared to an able bodied FIBA player tripping an opponent by extending a leg. This has been recognised by IWBF by the inclusion of Article 33.5.3 to cover this situation which I have described in this book as a **wheelchair tripping** situation.
- The prime consideration for officials in *Figure B.7* is whether Red 4 has given Blue 6 time and distance to avoid the contact. By moving into the braking area, Red 4 may not have achieved a legal position.

(continued ..)



Guarding (continued .. )

## CYLINDER AND THE WHEELCHAIR FOOTPRINT (CYLINDER)

The wheelchair **footprint** is the floor space occupied by the wheelchair. This **footprint** includes the air space directly above that footprint. This is described in the IWBF Rulebook as the player's **cylinder**. A player is entitled to occupy the area of his wheelchair **footprint** and the airspace vertically above that footprint.

This book focuses primarily on wheelchair positioning and the concept of PATH. This focus in no way undervalues the importance of the principle of a player's wheelchair cylinder when determining the legality of a player's floor position.



A player can extend his arms above his head within his wheelchair cylinder. This may mean that his arms extend forward of the trunk of his body but still legally remain within his wheelchair cylinder.

A defensive player is entitled to extend his arms above his head within his cylinder to discourage or prevent a shot by an opponent. He can move his arms around within that airspace but he is not entitled to change his arm position in order to contact illegally the arms of an opponent who has followed through into his cylinder on a shot or pass.

An offensive player who shoots or passes is entitled to follow through with his hands and arms into the cylinder area of an opponent without making contact that disadvantages the opponent.

In this first photo (left), defender GREEN 15 (Brad Ness – Australia) is extending his arm **legally** above his head and approximately within his own cylinder to prevent a pass or shot by WHITE 12 (Patrick Anderson – Canada)

*Both Photos: Courtesy of Wheelchair Basketball Canada and Kevin Bogetti-Smith Photography. Used with permission.*

In this next photo, both of the BLUE defenders are extending their arms above the head of the WHITE shooter and inside his wheelchair cylinder.

Neither defender is making contact with the opponent's arms, even though the defenders may possibly be close to making chair-to-chair contact.

Because no contact has been made yet by the defenders, no foul has been committed, even though the arms of the defenders are extended into the wheelchair cylinder of the shooter.

If either one of the defenders keeps his arm(s) in this position in the cylinder, and if the shooter contacts the defensive arm(s) as he shoots the ball, the responsibility for this arm contact will lie with the defenders.



## SECTION C

# CLOSING THE GAP



*Photo: Courtesy of Sports and Spokes  
© Paralyzed Veterans of America, Sports 'n Spokes.  
Photo by Mark Cowan.*

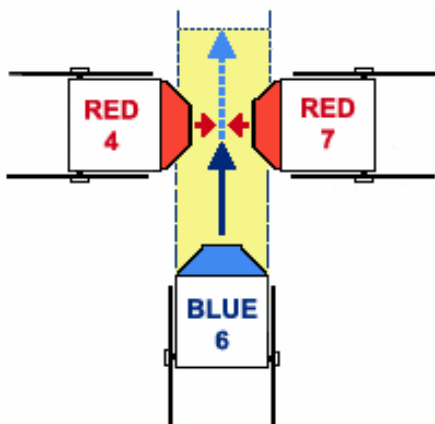


# CLOSING THE GAP

- *Closing the gap* describes a situation where **two defenders** move towards each other to close up a space that an opponent is attempting to wheel through.
- This is a very common contact situation. Quite often, this contact is off the ball.
- This situation often occurs when the defence team is playing a zone defence.
- It also occurs during man-to-man defence.

## Example of Closing The Gap

Figure C.1: Closing The Gap



Defenders Red 4 and Red 7 are stationary with a space between their chairs. The space is small than a chair width.

Opponent Blue 6 tries to push through the space between Red 4 and Red 7.

Red 4 and Red 7 each push forwards to close the space even further.

Contact occurs between Blue 6 and either one or both of the two defenders.

**Decision:** Pushing foul by Blue 6.

There as never enough space for Blue 6 to wheel through the gap between Red 4 and Red 7.

The fact that Red 4 and Red 7 closed the gap even further did not change the situation. The original gap was never wide enough for **BLUE 6** to fit through without causing contact,

The yellow shaded area = braking area of Blue 6.

**Comment:** To decide who is responsible for the contact, the official must apply the PATH rules, i.e.

**Off ball** = Who got there first?  
In this case, **Red 4** and **Red 7** were there first

..... Or, if Blue 6 had the ball ...

**On ball** = Was the path covered by **one** of the defenders?  
OR  
Was the player with the ball given time to avoid contact?

## Closing The Gap: What should the officials look for?

The decision of the officials will be based upon five factors.

1. Did **Blue 6** have the ball? ..... Or was this **off-ball** contact?
2. If **Blue 6** had the ball, did Red 4 and Red 7 allow Blue 6 time to *brake or change direction* to avoid contact?
3. If **Blue 6** did *not* have the ball, *who got there first?*
4. Was there *ever* enough space between Red 4 and Red 7 for **Blue 6** to fit through the gap **before** Red 4 and Red 7 moved to close the gap even further?  
*If there was **never** enough space for Blue 6 to fit through, Blue 6 has attempted to move **illegally** into floor space already **legally** occupied by opponents, even though the opponents moved to make the gap even smaller.*
5. Was the degree of contact significant enough to cause a disadvantage or to create an advantage?  
*If the defence **legally** closed the gap, but the resulting contact was not excessive, and did not change the play situation in any significant way, the officials may judge this contact to be a no call. However, any **illegal** move by the defence which prevents the offence player from getting through a gap he should reasonably have expected to get through **legally** is a defensive foul, no matter how slight the contact.*

(continued ...)

*Closing The Gap (continued... ..)*

In the following pages, we will examine the following four situations:

**ON BALL**

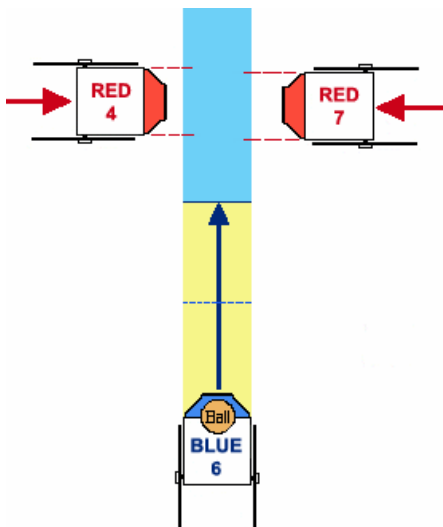
1. Blue 6 has the ball and ..... .. has time to avoid contact
2. Blue 6 has the ball but ..... .. does not have time to avoid contact

**OFF BALL**

3. Blue 6 does not have the ball and ... .. has time to avoid contact
4. Blue 6 does not have the ball and ... .. does not have time to avoid contact

**Example 1 - Blue 6 has the ball and has time to avoid contact**

*Figure C.2: Time to avoid contact*



Blue 6 has the ball. The yellow shaded area = braking area of Blue 6.

The distance from Blue 6 to Red 4 and Red 7 is **more** than two chair-lengths i.e. more than the distance that Blue 6 needs to stop or change direction to avoid contact.

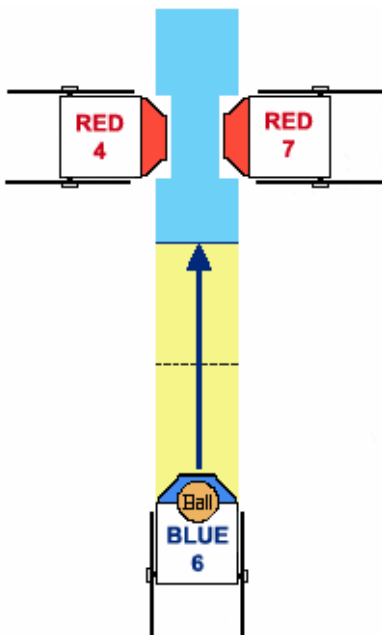
Blue 6 pushes towards the gap between Red 4 and Red 7.

Red 4 and Red 7 **both** push towards each other to close the gap.

If Red 4 and Red 7 can occupy some of the path of Blue 6 **outside the braking area** of Blue 6, then Blue 6 must avoid contact

- See Figure C.3 below

*Figure C3: Legal defence*



Here, Red 4 and Red 7 have successfully moved into the path of Blue 6 while allowing Blue 6 time and distance to avoid contact.

*(The yellow shaded area = braking area of Blue 6.)*

Blue 6 must avoid the legal positions of Red 4 and Red 7.

**Comment:**

*Because the defenders have legally occupied a position beyond the braking distance of Blue 6, the defenders do not have to cover the path of Blue 6.*

*Blue 6 has been given time to stop or change direction to avoid contact.*

*If Red 4 and Red 7 maintain their legal positions, then Blue 6 will be responsible for contact.*

*Even if Red 4 and Red 7 close the gap further when Blue 6 gets within braking distance, Red 4 and Red 7 **remain legal** because there was never enough room for Blue 6 to get through the gap between Red 4 and Red 7.*

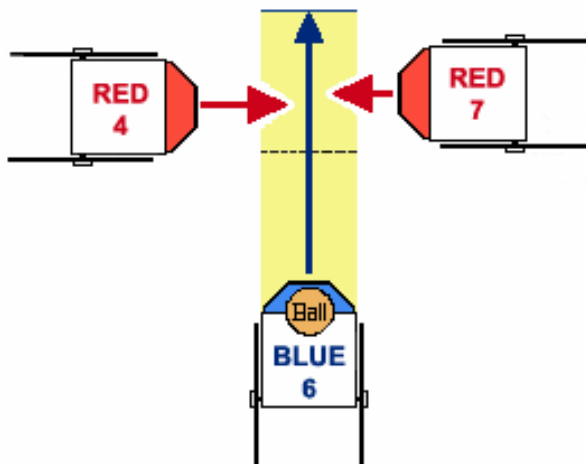
The yellow shaded area = braking area of Blue 6.

*(continued ...)*

Closing The Gap (continued... ..)

## Example 2 – Blue 6 has the ball and is *not* given time to avoid contact

Figure C.4: Defence inside braking distance



Blue 6 has the ball. The distance to Red 4 and Red 7 is **less than** the distance that Blue 6 needs to avoid contact. Blue 6 pushes towards the gap between Red 4 and Red 5. The yellow shaded area = braking area of Blue 6.

Red 4 and Red 7 both either pivot or push towards each other to close the gap.

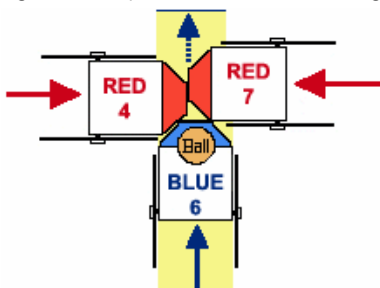
If contact occurs **after** Blue 6 has legally entered the gap, Red 4 and Red 7 are responsible for contact.

**In this situation, ONE of the two defenders must cover the ENTIRE path of Blue 6.**

The type of contact that results from Figure C.4 is shown in Figure C.5 and Figure C.6.

In BOTH of the situations shown in Figure C.5 and Figure C.6, a **defensive** foul should be called.

Figure C.5: (action follows from Fig C.4)



In *Fig U.5*, neither Red 4 nor Red 7 has covered the path of Blue 6.

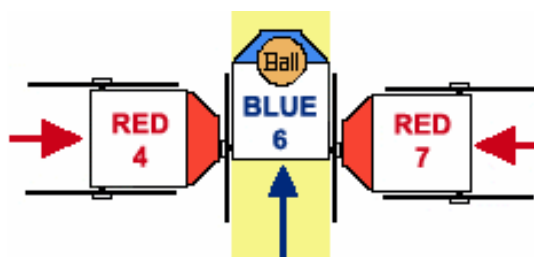
Red 4 and Red 7 **cannot** legally cover half of the path each if they enter the path **within the braking distance** of Blue 6 who has the ball because **Blue 6** has not been given time to avoid contact.

**Decision:** In *Fig C.5*, the officials should call the foul on whichever defender first came into contact with Blue 6.

**Comment:** The reality is that in the situation shown in *Figure C.4* and *Figure C.5*, Blue 6 would have to be travelling fairly quickly. A chair travelling slowly can stop in less than a chair length.

If Blue 6 in *Figure C.4* was stationary or travelling slowly, the **Braking Distance** would NOT be the TWO chair lengths shown in *Figure C.4* and *Figure C.5*

Figure C.6: (action follows from Fig C.4)



In *Fig C.6*, Blue 6 has clearly entered the gap first. The officials should call a Pushing foul on whichever defender first came into contact with Blue 6. **The officials should look for the point of contact.** In this case, contact has occurred on the side of Blue 6's chair and this indicates that neither defender reached a legal position.

**Decision:** In *Fig C.6*, the officials should call the foul on whichever defender first came into contact with Blue 6. In *Fig.6*, This contact would be a defensive foul, even if Blue 6 did not have the ball.

**Comment** – In *Examples 1 and 2*, if the original gap was **not** wide enough for Blue 6 to fit through, then Blue 6 will be responsible for the contact. Blue 6 does not have the right to try to crash through a gap that was not wide enough to fit through. The officials should look for the point of contact. Where the gap was not wide enough for Blue 6 to fit through, contact will usually occur in the front of Blue 6's chair.

**Note:** Where two **offensive** players attempt to close the gap on a **defender**, and contact occurs, the officials would make a decision based upon the rules for **Screening**.

(continued ...)

Closing The Gap (continued... ..)

### Example 3 - Blue 6 does *not* have the ball and has time to avoid contact.

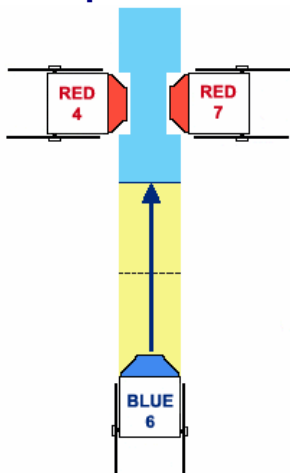


Figure C.7: Legal closing of the gap

Red 4 and Red 7 wheel towards each other **beyond the braking distance** that Blue 6 needs to stop. Blue 6 has been allowed time and distance to avoid contact with Red 4 and Red 7 who have moved in to close the gap between them. **The yellow shaded area = braking area of Blue 6.**

If Blue 6 continues on his path and contacts either Red 4 or Red 7, Blue 6 will be responsible for the contact.

Red 4 and Red 7 do not have to *cover the path* of Blue 6 because they established legal position outside the braking distance that Blue 6 needs to stop. The relevant principle in this off-ball situation is *Who got there first?*

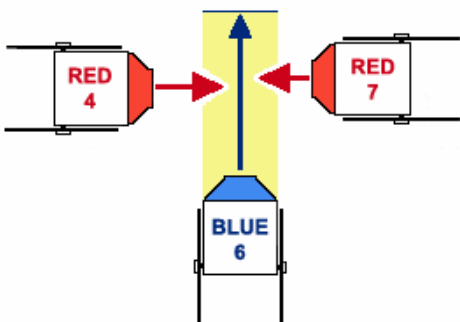
#### Comment

In Example 3, Figure C.7, where Blue 6 has time to avoid contact, the **width** of the original gap is **not** relevant. If the gap was not wide enough for Blue 6 to fit through, then Blue 6 will be responsible for the contact. Blue 6 does not have the right to try to crash through a gap that was not wide enough to fit through.

The officials should look for the point of contact. In this case, where the gap was not wide enough to fit through, contact will usually occur in the front of Blue 6's chair.

### Example 4 – Blue 6 does not have the ball and does *not* have time to avoid contact

Figure C.8: Legal closing of the gap off the ball



In Figure C.8, defenders Red 4 and Red 7 push towards each other to close the gap that Blue 6 is attempting to enter.

Red 4 and Red 7 are entitled to close the gap because Blue 6 does not have the ball.

Red 4 and Red 7 do **not** have to *cover the path* of Blue 6 because this is an **off-ball** guarding situation covered by the principle **Who got there first?**

If Blue 6 wheels into either or both of Red 4 and Red 7, **Blue 6 will be responsible for contact.**

The yellow shaded area is the braking area of Blue 6.

#### TO COVER THE PATH LEGALLY, **ONE** DEFENDER MUST COVER THE **ENTIRE** PATH.

1. In Fig. C.8, **ONE** of the two defenders – either Red 4 or Red 7 - must cover the **entire** path of Blue 6 before contact occurs if the defenders have entered the path of Blue 6 inside the braking distance of Blue 6.

2. If **both** of the defenders move into the path of Blue 6 **inside the braking distance** of Blue 6, they cannot legally *cover the path* by covering half of the path each.

ONE defender **inside the braking distance** of Blue 6 must cover the **entire** path. If there was only one defender, he could not legally cover just half of the path. His inability to cover the entire path cannot be negated by another defender who also was unable to *cover the path*.

**In this case, two half chairs do NOT make a whole.**

3. The only way one defender (or both) can cover only **part** of the path of Blue 6 and be legal is if he establishes a legal position **beyond** the braking distance of Blue 6, thereby giving Blue 6 time to avoid contact.

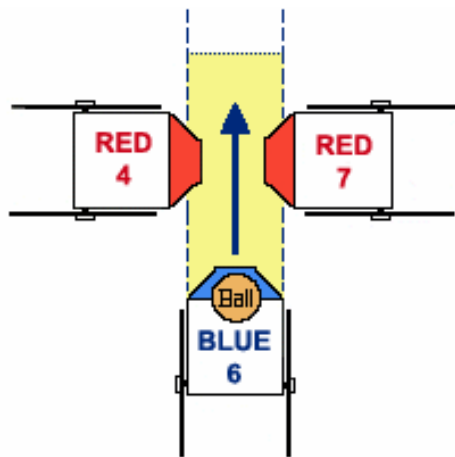
(continued ..)

Closing The Gap (continued... ..)

Two Common Situations where there is NO ROOM to get through the gap.

### Situation 1: No room between the chairs

Figure C.9



This is similar to the situation in *Figure C.10a* and *Figure C.10b* where there was never enough room for Blue 6 to fit through the gap. *The yellow shaded area = braking area of Blue 6.*

Red 4 and Red 7 are **stationary** in the path of Blue 6. Blue 6 begins to push towards Red 4 and Red 7. If Blue 6 contacts either Red 4 or Red 7, Blue 6 will be responsible for contact because Red 4 and Red 7 had stationary legal positions **before** Blue 6 started to move.

Even if Red 4 and Red 7 now moved towards each other to narrow the gap, they are entitled to their floor positions within the path of Blue 6. Blue 6, with or without the ball, would be responsible for contact because there was never enough room for Blue 6 to fit through the space between Red 4 and Red 7.

The yellow shaded area = braking area of Blue 6.

#### NOTE:

If there was originally enough space for Blue 6 to get through, and then Red 4 and Red 7 each closed part of the gap within the braking distance of Blue 6, this would be a Blocking foul by whichever defender first contacted Blue 6.

#### IMPORTANT:

Two defenders cannot move into the path and share covering part of the path of Blue 6 between them within the braking distance of Blue 6.

ONE defender **MUST** have covered the ENTIRE path to be legal.

### Judgement of *Closing The Gap* – The thought process for officials

#### EITHER .....

1. No ball involved
2. Is there is enough space there to get through the gap?
3. Watch to see *who got there first*.

#### ... OR ...

1. Player has the ball
2. Is there is enough space there?
3. Did *one* of the defenders *get there* in time?  
i.e. Did *one* defender *cover the path*?  
or Did the defence allow time to avoid contact?

(continued ..)



Closing The Gap (continued... ..)

## Examples: Closing The Gap



Photo courtesy of Sports and Spokes

© Paralyzed Veterans of America, Sports 'n Spokes. Photo by Mark Cowan.

In this photo, let us assume that there originally **was** room for the White team player who has the ball to wheel **legally** through the gap between the chairs of Blue 3 and Blue 42

Blue 3 and Blue 42 have both wheeled too late into the path of the White team player who has the ball, within his braking distance, in an attempt to close the gap and prevent the White team player progressing up the floor.

Neither Blue 3 nor Blue 42 has covered the **entire** path of the White team opponent.

**Decision:** A **Blocking** foul should be called against whichever Blue player first contacted the White team opponent.

**One** of the Blue players must cover the *entire path* of the player who has the ball.



Photo from Basketball News July 1996  
Used with permission of the Editor

This next photo shows two of the world's best high point players of their era - Troy Sachs (Australia - No.5 Gold) and Curtis Bell (USA - No.13 Black).

There are **two** *closing the gap* situations that are possible in this photo.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Possible Situation.

USA 13 Black and his team-mate (obscured in the photo) have **illegally** closed the gap on this drive by Gold 5. Neither one of the USA defenders has *covered the path* of Gold 5, and Gold 5 has not been allowed time or distance to avoid contact.

**Decision:** Blocking foul on whichever USA player first contacted Gold 5.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Possible Situation

USA 13 Black and his team-mate had established legal positions first in front of 5 Gold and **beyond the braking distance** of Gold 5. There was **never** enough room for Gold 5 to fit through the small gap between the two defensive chairs.

Gold 5 had time to avoid contact - but he chose to drive at the small gap between the chairs of his opponents. There was never enough room for Gold 5 to fit through the gap between the defence chairs when contact occurred. Any small legal extra movement by the two defence players to further close the gap becomes irrelevant.

**Decision:** Gold 5 is Charging .

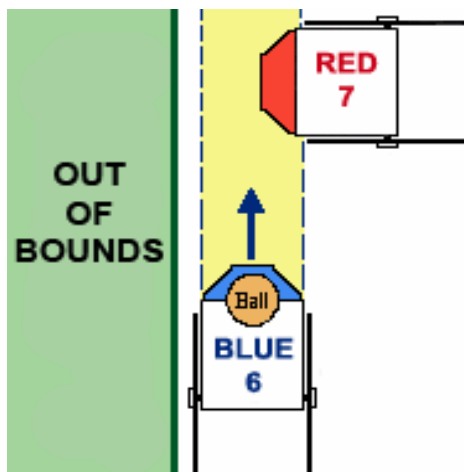
(continued ..)

Closing The Gap (continued... ..)

## Situation 2: No room on the sideline or the baseline.

*Figure C.10a:* There is only a small gap between Red 7 and the sideline.  
There is not enough room for Blue 6 to wheel through legally without contact.

The yellow shaded area = braking area of Blue 6.



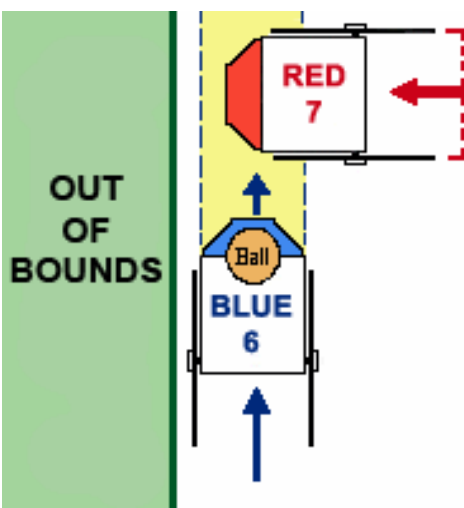
Blue 6 and Red 7 are both stationary.

Red 7 has positioned his chair legally so that there is only a small space between his chair and the sideline or baseline. The space is smaller than the width of a wheelchair. (Fig C.10a)

Blue 6 attempts to wheel through the space between Red 7 and the sideline. The space is not wide enough for Blue 6 to fit through.

As Blue 6 wheels towards this small space, Red 7 moves to further reduce the size of the space. (Fig C.10b)  
Blue 6 runs into Red 7.

*Figure C10b:* Legal closing of the gap



**In this second situation, there was never enough room for Blue 6 to wheel through the small space between Red 7 and the sideline.**

Responsibility for contact will be the same, regardless of whether or not Blue 6 had the ball.

Even if Blue 6 has the ball and Red 7 has not covered the path of Blue 6, Blue 6 is responsible for contact because Red 7 occupied an area of the path of Blue 6 before Blue 6 started to move.

If Blue 6 did **not** have the ball, Blue 6 is still responsible for contact because Red 7 got there first – an off ball situation

### **Comment:**

*This type of contact occurs frequently both on the ball and off the ball around the baseline, when players try to get through small gaps between chairs around the restricted area.*

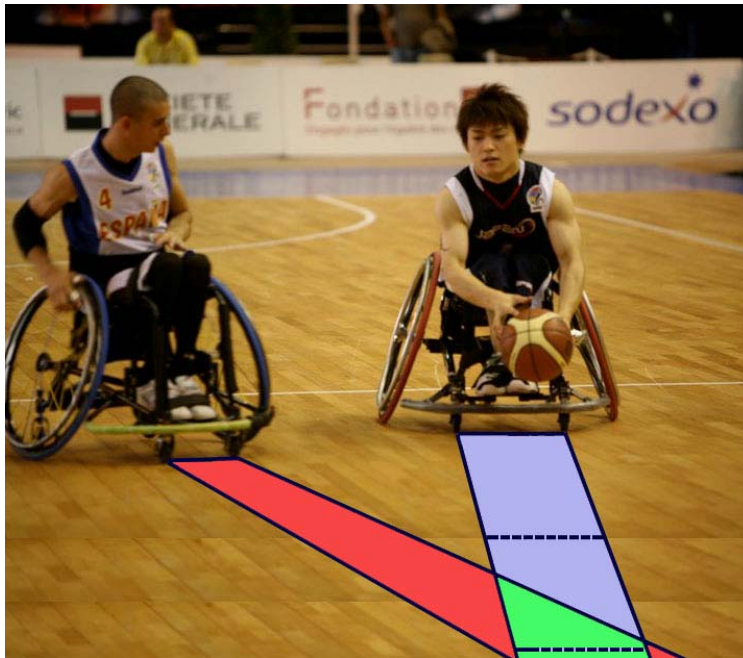
**If contact is slight**, the official's call in each case (with or without the ball) may be **NO CALL – Play on**, unless other factors are involved.

**Note** that it is a violation for a player to wheel out of bounds to get past an opponent. Repeatedly doing this after being warned may result in a stronger penalty.

## Section D

# Converging Paths

1. Definition: Converging Paths
2. Guarding the player who controls the ball
3. When neither player has the ball

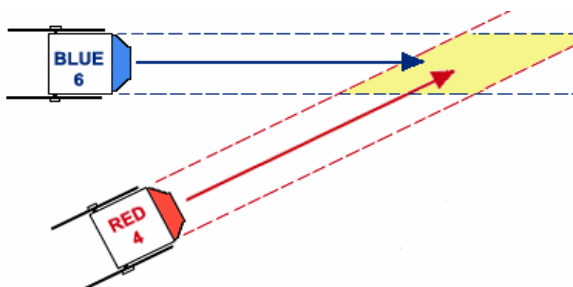


*Original photo by Matthew Wells for IWBF. Used by permission  
Added graphic by Ross Dewell.*



## CONVERGING PATHS - DEFINITION

Figure D.1 Converging Paths



**CONVERGING PATHS** refers to the paths of two opponents who are travelling in **straight** lines at an acute angle towards the same point. (see Figure D.1)

There is **no change of direction** by either player.

The fact that the players maintain this straight-line path **with no change of direction** is the difference between the two situations called **Converging Paths** and **Crossing The Path**.

### What is the difference between a **Converging Path** and **Crossing The Path**?

**Answer:** A **Converging Paths** situation involves straight-line paths, with **no change of direction** by either player, whereas **Crossing the Path** involves a change of direction.

There are basically TWO situations to consider involving **converging paths**:

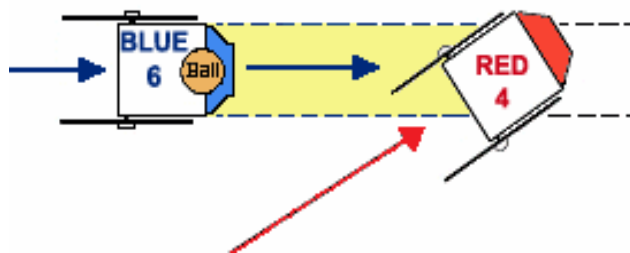
- (a) Situation No.1: when one of the two opponents **has the ball** (i.e. Guarding The Ball Carrier).
- (b) Situation No.2: when **neither** opponent has the ball.

### Situation No.1: GUARDING THE PLAYER WHO CONTROLS THE BALL

- The guarding principles apply. The responsibility is on the defender to obtain legal position, i.e., **cover the path**, or **allow time and distance** to avoid contact.
- In Figures D.2 to D.6, **Blue 6 has the ball**.  
In each example, it is the responsibility of the defender to obtain legal position, i.e., to **cover-the-path** of his opponent Blue 6, or **allow Blue 6 time and distance to avoid contact**.

#### Example 1: Defender covers the path

Figure D.2 Blue 6 has the ball.

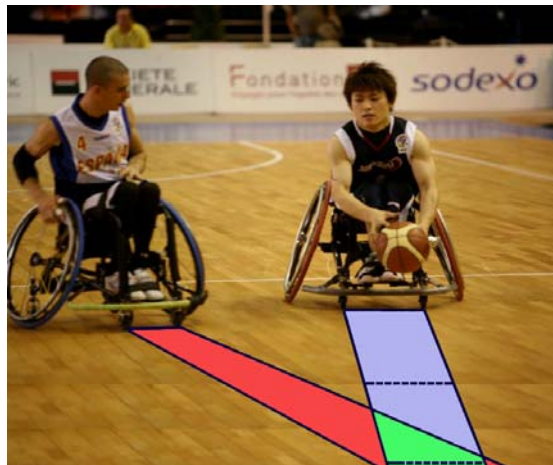


Red 4 has *covered the path* of Blue 6. Blue 6 has time to avoid contact, but runs into Red 4.

**Decision:** Charging foul by Blue 6.

*Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Articles 33.3; 33.4.2*

In the photos below, each white defender is on a **converging path** with an opponent who has the ball. To reach a legal guarding position in the braking area of the opponent before contact occurs, the white defender must *cover the path* of the player who has the ball.

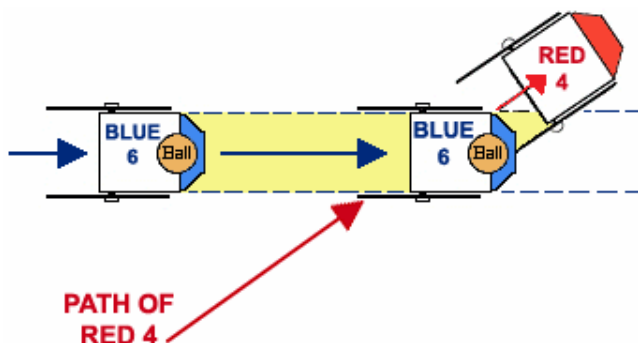


Original photos by Matthew Wells for IWBF. Used by permission. Added graphics by Ross Dewell.

(continued ..)

*Converging Paths (continued)*

Now let's consider what happens if Blue 6 contacts the rear wheel of Red 4 while Red 4 is **leaving the path** after having legally *covered the path* of Blue 6? (See *Figure D.3*)

**Example 2. The ball carrier contacts a defender who is leaving the path***Figure D.3*

**Blue 6 has the ball.** Red 4 has already legally covered the path of Blue 6. Red 4 continues to roll across the path of Blue 6, and then starts to exit the path. Blue 6 runs into the rear wheel of Red 4.

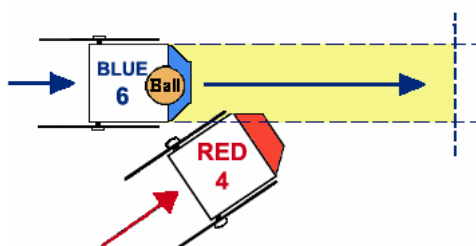
**Decision: Charging** foul by Blue 6

Reference: *IWBF Rulebook - Articles 33.3*

**Comments:**

In *Figure D.3*, Red 4 has continued to legally occupy the area of floor into which Blue 6 has tried to enter. That area is part of the cylinder of Red 4. (Reference: *IWBF Rulebook – Article 33.2*)

Red 4 had established a legal right to occupy that area when it was a part of the area he occupied when he pushed across and covered the path of Blue 6.

**Example 3: Defender Red 4 fails to cover the path***Figure D.4*

Blue 6 has the ball. Blue 6 and Red 4 are on **converging paths. Neither player changes direction.** Red 4 enters the path of Blue 6, without *covering the path* of Blue 6. Blue 6 runs into the side of Red 4's chair.

**Decision: Blocking Foul** by defender Red 4.

Red 4 has failed to get legal position (failed to *cover-the-path*).

Reference: *IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.3*

The yellow shaded area = braking area of Blue 6.

**Comment: - Guarding the player with the ball**

In *Figure D.4* - Red 4 has failed to establish a legal defensive position i.e. Red 4 has not **covered the path** and has not allowed Blue 6 **time to avoid contact**.

In this photo, RED 13 is committing a foul similar to the foul shown in *Figure D.4*.

RED 13 has failed to *cover the path* of WHITE 7 who has the ball and is trying to push forwards along his path.

RED 13 has committed a **BLOCKING** foul by illegally blocking the forward progress of WHITE 7. The footrests and front castors of WHITE 7 are clearly visible indicating that the path of WHITE 7 has not been covered by the RED player's chair.



Photo: Courtesy of Wheelchair Basketball Canada and Kevin Bogetti-Smith Photography. Used with permission.

(continued ..)



*Converging Paths (continued)*

Here is a photo of a defensive player (Green 5) *Guarding On The Ball* in a situation similar to Example 3 (*Figure D.4*).

Green 5 (Troy Sachs - Australia) has tried to *cover the path* of an opponent White 8 (Joey Johnson – Canada) in a shooting situation. This is a very close decision.

- Did Green 5 *cover the path*?
- Did Green 5 just fail to reach legal position?

It is difficult to judge this because it is so close.

Two facts are very clear in the photo:

1. Green 5 has pushed into the **braking area** of White 8.
  2. White 8 was in the act of shooting when contact occurred.
- In such a tight call, the benefit of the doubt should go with the shooter. If the official decided that Green 5 just failed to *cover the path*, this would be a Blocking foul on Green 5.

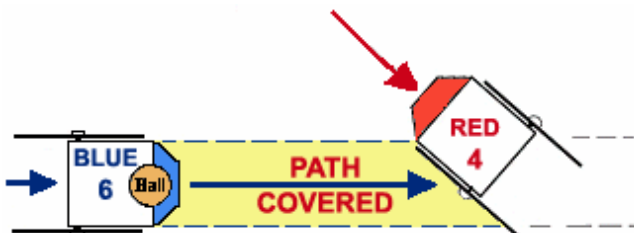
There would be another possibility for the official to consider. Did White 8 change direction and attempt to *cross the path* illegally? It is not possible to tell from this photo.



*Photo: Courtesy of Wheelchair Basketball Canada and Kevin Bogetti-Smith Photography. Used with permission.*

### Example 4: Defender Red 4 pushes backwards into the path of ball carrier Blue 6.

*Figure D.5: Covering the Path*



**Blue 6 has the ball.**

Red 4 has *covered the path* of Blue 6 by wheeling in backwards.

The yellow shaded area = braking area of Blue 6.

**Decision:** Charging Foul by Blue 6

*Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.3*

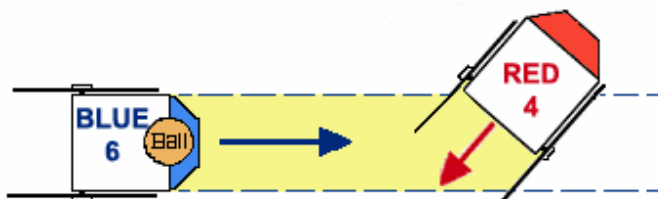
### Example 5: Wheeling In Backwards

Players can wheel in backwards to cover the path. In *Figure D.6*, defender Red 4 has wheeled into the path of opponent Blue 6 who has the ball. Red 4 legally has covered the path of Blue 6.

*Figure D.6: Covering the Path*

Red 4 has wheeled in backwards to legally *cover the path* of opponent Blue 6 who has the ball.

*The yellow shaded area = braking area of Blue 6.*



**Comment:**

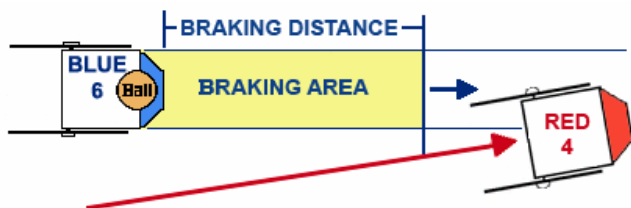
*When covering the path of an opponent, it does not matter which part of the wheelchair is used to cover the path. It also does not matter in which direction the wheelchair is moving or facing, or whether the defender wheels forwards or backwards to reach a legal position.*

(continued ..)

Converging Paths (continued ... )

### Example 6: Defender Red 4 enters the path of Blue 6 beyond the braking distance and at an acute angle

Figure D.7: Acute angle - Time and Distance



**Blue 6 has the ball.** Red 4 is in the path of Blue 6, but has not covered the path of Blue 6.

However, Red 4 has entered the path of Blue 6 at a very acute angle, well beyond the braking distance that Blue 6 needs to stop or change direction. Blue 6 runs into the back of Red 4.

**Decision:** Charging foul by Blue 6 (Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.3)

#### Comments:

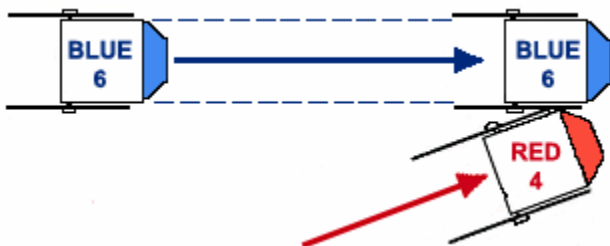
- Although Red 4 (Figure D.7) has not covered the path of Blue 6, the reality of the situation in Figure D.7 is that the angle of the two chairs would have to be extremely acute for this situation even to occur. For Red 4 to be able to enter the path at an acute angle beyond the braking distance of Blue 6, there would be a great deal of distance, further than two chair lengths, between the chairs.
- If Red 4 got his axle-in-the-path from that acute angle, and then maintained his path, then Blue 6 would have had **more** than enough time to take evasive action to avoid contact. In fact, the more acute the angle, the more time Blue 6 would have.
- Once again, **Blue 6** who has the ball has the same responsibility in IWBF basketball as he would have in FIBA basketball - **he must expect to be guarded, and he must be prepared to avoid contact with legal defence. He always must maintain control of his chair in order to avoid legal defence.**

### Situation No 2:

### GUARDING A PLAYER WHO DOES NOT CONTROL THE BALL

If a defender wishes to take a legal position to guard an opponent who does not control the ball he has only to occupy that position before the opponent.

Figure D.8



In Figure D.8 neither player has the ball. RED 4 and BLUE 6 are on converging paths. RED 4 runs into the side of BLUE 6. The officials must **decide Who Got There First?**

#### Decision:

RED 4 has committed a PUSHING foul. BLUE 6 has legal position. BLUE 6 'got there' first i.e. BLUE 6 occupied a legal position before RED 4.

References: IWBF Rulebook - Articles 33.5.1

**Comment:** Although this situation – Situation 2 - applies to a defender, the principle applies equally to players on the offensive and defensive teams who are opposing each other individually and who do not control the ball. For example, a defender must also obey rules for special situations such as Crossing the Path, and for moving into a moving opponent's braking area from a close stationary position (see Page D.8 - Wheelchair Tripping)

### ON THE BALL CONTACT

**Question:** Who would be responsible for contact if either one of the two players in Figure D.8 had the ball?

#### Answers:

1. If **Red 4** had the ball, BLUE 6 would be committing a PUSHING foul.
2. If **Blue 6** had the ball, Red 4 would be committing a BLOCKING foul because RED 4 has failed to cover the path of Blue 6. These situations are explained in this next section.

(continued .. )

## Responsibility For Contact Can Change Depending Upon Whether The Situation Is On The Ball or Off The Ball

There is, and there has long been, a clear and existing difference in the rules for contact occurring **on the ball** and **off the ball** in IWBF wheelchair basketball.

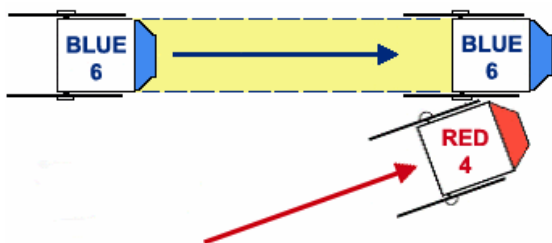
**On-ball contact** means where a defender is guarding a player who has the ball.

**Off-ball contact** means where a player is guarding a player who does not have the ball.

Here are three examples that illustrate that there is a difference in the responsibility for contact depending upon whether the contact occurs between a defender and an opponent who has the ball (i.e. play on the ball), or between a defender and an opponent who does not have the ball (i.e., play off the ball).

### Example 1: Guarding Off the Ball (Figure D.9)

*Figure D.9* Neither player has the ball. Both players are moving.



Two opponents BLUE 6 and RED 4 are heading up the court in straight lines towards the same spot. In other words, they are on **CONVERGING PATHS**. Neither player has the ball. **Neither player changes direction.** BLUE 6 reaches that spot first. RED 4 runs into the side of BLUE 6. The contact occurs while both players are still moving.

**Decision:** Pushing foul by Red 4 because Blue 6 got there first (reached the position first).

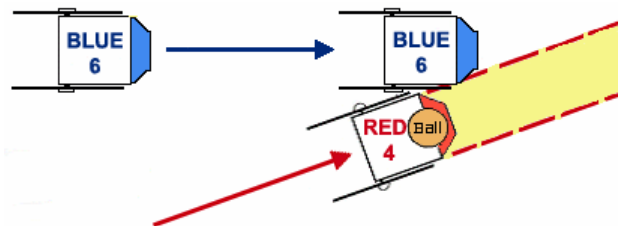
*References: IWBF Rulebook - Articles 33.5.1*

Now let's see how the responsibility for this same piece of contact changes when we give RED 4 the ball in this **same** situation (*Figure D.10*), or alternatively when we give BLUE 6 the ball (*Figure D.11*) ..... see the examples that follow....

### Example 2: Guarding On the Ball (Figure D.10)

This is the same situation as in *Figure D.9*, but this time one of the players involved in the contact (Red 4) has the ball.

*Figure D.10* Red 4 has the ball.



Two opponents BLUE 6 and RED 4 are heading up court in straight lines towards the same spot. That is, they are on **CONVERGING PATHS**. RED 4 has the ball. BLUE 6 is a defender. RED 4 is attempting to reach the restricted area to attempt a lay-up.

**Neither player changes direction.**

BLUE 6 pushes his footrests just fractionally into the path of RED 4. Severe contact occurs.

The point of contact is exactly the same as in **Situation One**.

The contact occurs while both players are still moving. Neither player has changed direction.

**Decision:** Blocking foul by Blue 6. RED 4 has legal position because BLUE 6 has failed to cover the path of the ball carrier Red 4.

*Rulebook Reference: 33.4.3:*

*"The defensive player must establish an initial legal guarding position by either:*

- (i) Covering the path of the opponent, or*
- (ii) Establishing a position in the path of the opponent that allows the opponent time and distance to avoid contact."*

**Conclusion:** In Situations 1 and 2 (*Figures D.9* and *D.10*) .....

- The paths are the same.
- The point of contact is the same.
- However, it is clear that in these two identical situations **responsibility for contact has changed** only because in Situation 2 (*Figure D.10*) one of the players has the ball.

(continued .. )



*Converging Paths: Changing Responsibility For Contact On-Ball and Off-Ball (continued ...)*

Here is a sequence of photos that illustrates the exact situation described in *Figure D.10*

*Photos below by Matthew Wells for IWBF. Used by permission.*



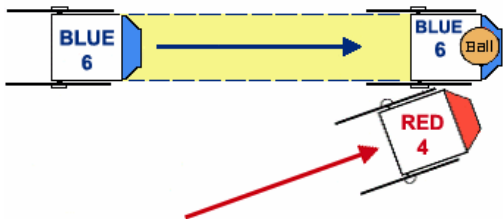
Defensive player WHITE 10 has managed to get in front of an opponent BLUE 5 who has the ball, but WHITE 10 has failed to *cover the path* of BLUE 5.



BLUE 5 runs into WHITE 10.  
This is a **converging paths** situation.  
In this situation, the defender WHITE 10 is required to *cover the path* of the opponent who has the ball but he has failed to do this.  
**Decision:** This is a BLOCKING foul by WHITE 10

**Example 3: Guarding On the Ball**

**Question:** Who would be responsible for contact in *Figure B.2* if BLUE 6 had the ball instead of RED 4?  
*Figure D.11*



This is the same diagram as *Figure D.10* but this time Blue 6 has the ball. RED 4 runs into the side of Blue 6.

**Decision:** Pushing foul by Red 4 who has failed to establish a legal position in the path of the ball carrier Blue 6.  
*Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.4.3*

**Comment:** In *Figure D.11*, RED 4 has failed to cover the path of BLUE 6, and he has also not allowed BLUE 6 time to avoid contact. In fact, RED 4 is attempting to enter a position already occupied by his opponent. These two examples (*Figures D.11* and *D.12*) are simple but they demonstrate clearly that in IWBF basketball, the rules for on-ball and off-ball contact are different. There is a very simple philosophy behind this fact. The player with the ball must control BOTH the ball and his wheelchair, so a defender who moves into his path must allow the ball carrier time and distance to avoid contact. This is a long-held IWBF principle. However, where neither opponent has the ball, each has an equal opportunity to stop. IWBF reflects this fact in its theory of contact by saying that whoever "gets there first" is entitled to the position. This is very logical and it is very easy for a referee to make this judgement.



Here is a photo (left) of a situation with a slight variation to the point of contact described in *Figure D.11*. This time, the contact is in front of the WHITE chair instead of into the side of the chair. BLACK 7 has failed to cover the path of WHITE 12 who has the ball. This is a BLOCKING foul by BLACK 7 because the contact is **in front** of the chair of WHITE 12. This may be an example of what I call *wheelchair tripping*.

– For Wheelchair Tripping, see next section .....

*Photo: Courtesy of Wheelchair Basketball Canada and Kevin Bogetti-Smith Photography. Used with permission.*

(continued ..)

## GUARDING A PLAYER WHO DOES NOT CONTROL THE BALL:

### *Wheelchair Tripping* - Changing From Stationary To Moving Defence

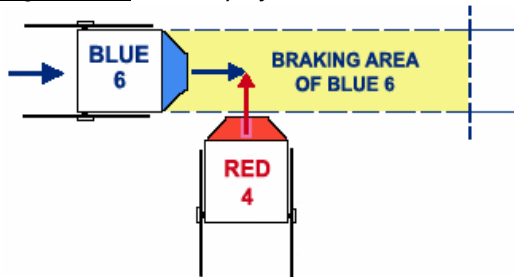
Article 33.5.3 specifically makes it illegal for a **stationary defender**, when guarding a moving player with or without the ball, to push suddenly into the opponent's braking area, from starting position within a chair length of the opponent's braking area, without allowing that opponent reasonable time to avoid contact. IWBF have introduced *article 33.5.3* specifically to outlaw contact that results from this action. This contact is the equivalent of *tripping* in FIBA basketball. This type of wheelchair contact is often severe, and possibly may be dangerous.

Consider the following situation in *Figure D.12* where neither player has the ball.

RED 4 is a defender. He is sitting stationary. A fast-moving opponent BLUE 6, who does not have the ball, is about to push quickly past him. When BLUE 6 is too close to RED 4 to stop or change direction, RED 4 suddenly pushes his footrests into BLUE 6's braking area (the space that BLUE 6 needs to stop). BLUE 6 has no time or distance to avoid contact. He crashes into the footrests of RED 4 and falls heavily to the floor. This is a foul on RED 4. If there is a wheelchair equivalent of tripping, this is it.

This "*tripping*" situation is different from other off-ball *converging-path* situations where both players have been moving for longer distances. In this "*tripping*" situation, Defender RED 4 in *Figure D.12* was **initially stationary** beside the opponent's braking area before pushing forward from **less than a chair length** away to enter that opponent's braking area. The distance of the braking area depends upon the speed of the player. It will never be more than two chair lengths. If a player is moving very slowly it may be less than a chair length.

*Figure D.12* Neither player has the ball.



RED 4 is stationary and then suddenly pushes into the braking area of BLUE 6.

The braking area is the space that BLUE 6 needs to stop. Notice that RED 4 is stationary and within a chair length of the braking area of BLUE 6 when he suddenly begins to push into the braking area of BLUE 6.

*Remember in this example that neither player has the ball.*

**Decision:** Blocking foul by RED 4, because RED 4 was **stationary close to the braking area but just outside the path** of BLUE 6.

*Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.5.3*

**Rationale:** When RED 4 suddenly pushed forwards into the braking area of BLUE 6 from a stationary spot less than a chair length away, he gave BLUE 6 no time to stop or change direction to avoid contact. Although off-ball a player normally only has to *get there first*, this is too late and too sudden for safety. It is like an able-bodied player tripping someone. The speed at which BLUE 6 is going if this contact occurs is crucial. The slower BLUE 6 is going, the less braking area he needs. If BLUE 6 is travelling at high speed, this contact can be dangerous.

#### **Comments:**

1. *Contact of this type is common around the restricted area, especially in a zone defence. However, frequently, and in fact on most occasions, this may not be not severe or significant contact. Players have little room to manoeuvre against a zone. Cutters can see small gaps that are quickly closed by the defenders. There is not usually great speed generated by players cutting through the zone, and the resulting contact is often relatively harmless, although of course it may still be illegal. However, usually the cutters have the opportunity to avoid significant contact. It is not contact of this nature that article 33.5.3 is addressing. It is more concerned with the often severe contact that occurs in more open play where a stationary defender moves suddenly and illegally to block a fast moving opponent who does not have the ball. Contact of this type will usually be heavy, and possibly dangerous. Contact of this type should be penalised. It is "wheelchair tripping".*

2. This wheelchair-tripping situation described in *Figure D.12* has always been illegal off the ball so there is nothing new here, but this situation was not specifically described in the IWBF rulebook until it was added to recent editions. This same move is also illegal when made by a *Screener* (article 33.8) or by a defender who is **Guarding The Player Who Controls The Ball** (article 33.4). In both of these situations, the opponent must be given time and distance to stop or change direction to avoid contact.

*(continued ..)*



*Wheelchair Tripping - Changing From Stationary To Moving Defence: Comments (continued ..)*

3. There is an important difference between this “wheelchair tripping” situation - article 33.5.3 - and article 33.4.3 which allows a **moving** defender **off the ball** to simply *get there first* in order to gain a legal position in the path of an opponent. In this new ‘tripping’ situation shown in *Figure D.12* and described in article 33.5.3, the defender RED 4 **is initially stationary** beside an opponent’s braking area, and then he suddenly pushes, from less than a chair length away, into the offensive opponent’s braking area, i.e. into the area that his offensive opponent BLUE 6 needs to stop. This defensive move is illegal if contact occurs.

The **stationary, starting position** of RED 4 in relation to the position of BLUE 6 **is absolutely critical** in determining responsibility for contact in this “tripping” situation described in article 33.5.3.

*If RED 4 starts far enough away to give BLUE 6 room to stop, then RED 4’s action becomes legal. If RED 4 starts his move so close to the braking area of BLUE 6 that BLUE 6 cannot avoid contact then RED 4 becomes responsible for the contact.*

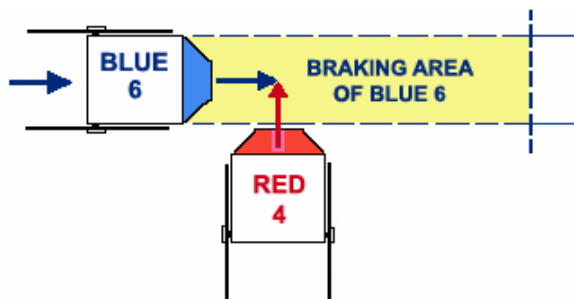
## How far away from an opponent does a defender have to be to make this move into the path legally off the ball?

There is a logical answer to this question.

First, remember that in most other **off-ball** situations, IWBF rules say that a moving defender (BLUE 6 in *Figure D.10*) only has to *get there first* before his moving opponent. This is because each player *off the ball* has an equal opportunity to stop or change direction. No player *off the ball* has to worry about using his hands to hold the ball. Each player *off the ball* has only his chair to handle. He has full use of both of his hands to steer, push or brake.

In these situations, each player *off the ball* has the opportunity to look for his opponents without worrying about dribbling the ball. Each has the opportunity to decide whether to race for a position, or to concede the position by stopping or changing direction. This is different to the situation described in *article 33.5.4* where the defender is initially stationary and suddenly pushes his footrests into the opponent’s braking area at the very last second when that opponent is too close to him to stop or change direction.

In the *off the ball* situation described in *article 33.5.3* (see *Figure D.12*), in order to move legally into the path of BLUE 6, RED 4 needs to allow his opponent time to stop or change direction. The distance required will depend upon the speed of his opponent. If RED 4 can vacate completely his defensive position outside of the path of BLUE 6, and occupy a totally new floor position **in the path** of BLUE 6 **this new position is legal**. He needs to occupy this new position before contact occurs. In other words, he needs to have **totally** left the floor area he previously occupied and then to have occupied a totally new position. If RED 4 has had time to occupy a new position, then BLUE 6 has had an equal time and opportunity to avoid contact. By moving to a totally new position, RED 4 has established a path of his own, and so the off-ball principle of *Who Got There First* will apply.



Logically then, for RED 4 to totally leave his previous position, he has to have moved more than a chair length. In other words, when RED 4 **begins** his move into the path of BLUE 6, RED 4’s **starting position** has to be more than a chair length from the braking area of BLUE 6. So this becomes a simple and easy judgement call by the referee.

Now, let’s simplify this for the referee and the players.

The referee will judge whether RED 4 was more than a chair length from the braking area of BLUE 6 when RED 4 began his move into that braking area. If RED 4 was beyond a chair length, he is legal. If he wasn’t, and contact occurs, he has committed a blocking foul. This is quite simple and logical. This interpretation is totally consistent with the off-ball contact principles of PATH theory.

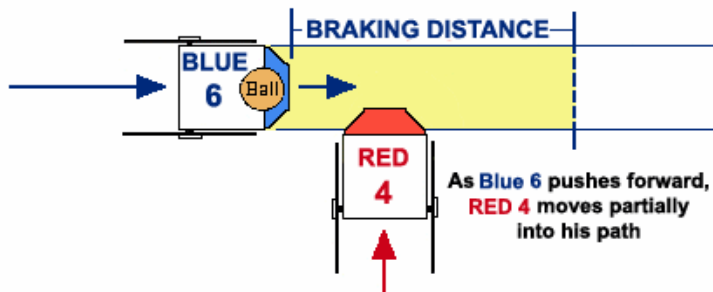
(continued ..)

*Wheelchair Tripping - Changing From Stationary To Moving Defence (continued ..)*

Now let's give the ball to **BLUE 6** from *Figure D.12* and see how the responsibility for contact changes.  
(See *Figure D.13*)

**Example 4: Guarding On the Ball**

(*Figure D.13*)



The nature of the contact is the same as in Situation Three. This is the same situation as in *Figure D.12* but this time BLUE 6 has the ball.

BLUE 6 pushes forwards with the ball.

RED 4 pushes into the path of BLUE 6 but without *covering the path* or allowing BLUE 6 time or distance to stop.

Blue 6 runs into Red 4.

**Decision:** RED 4 has committed a BLOCKING foul.

**Reason:** RED 4 has failed to *cover the path* of the player with the ball (BLUE 6) and RED 4 has not allowed BLUE 6 time to avoid contact. (Reference: *IWBF Rulebook – Articles 33.4.1; 33.4.2; 33.4.3*)



This photo shows a probable *wheelchair tripping* foul

In this photo, **let us assume that:**

- BLACK 7 was **stationary** just **outside** the path of WHITE 12.
- WHITE 12 was about to push legally in a **straight line path** across and in front of BLACK 7.
- BLACK 7 then has moved suddenly from his stationary position and has pushed **into the braking area** of WHITE 12.

BLACK 7's move consisted of a quick, short push on his wheels. He moved **less than** a chair-length. This is the move shown in *Figure D.13*.

It is a type of *Converging Paths* situation.

When WHITE 12 crashes into the footrests of BLACK 7, the impact is severe.

This should be called as a BLOCKING foul on BLACK 7. BLACK 7 has failed to *cover the path* of WHITE 12.

This is rather similar to *tripping* in able-bodied basketball. This is *wheelchair tripping*.

*Original Photo: Courtesy of Wheelchair Basketball Canada and Kevin Bogetti-Smith Photography. Used with permission. Added graphic by Ross Dewell.*

## Section E

# Crossing The Path



**BLUE 11 can legally cross the path from this position**

*Original photo by Matthew Wells for IWBF. Used by permission.*

*Added graphic by Ross Dewell.*

## CROSSING THE PATH

**Crossing The Path** involves two opponents travelling close together (closer than braking distance) and *approximately* parallel and in the same direction.

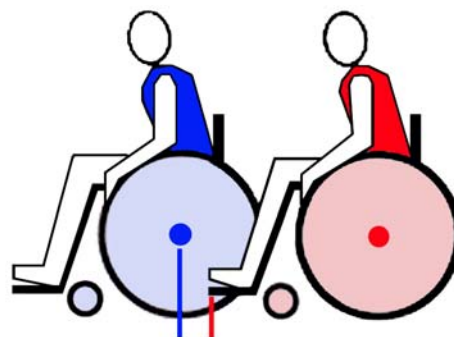
A **Crossing The Path** situation occurs when one of these players **changes direction** and turns across into the path of the opponent.

It is this **change of direction** that is the difference between the rules for *Crossing The Path* and *Converging Paths*.

- **Crossing The Path** involves a *change of direction*.
- **Converging Paths** does **not** involve a change of direction. Both players maintain straight-line paths.

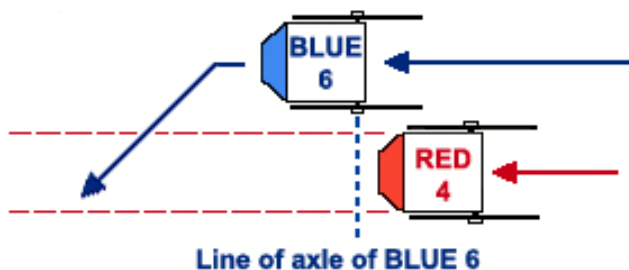
## LEGAL CROSSING THE PATH

- The player who is *crossing the path* is required to give the opponent time and distance to avoid contact.
- To *cross the path legally*, a player must not across turn into the path of the opponent until he has his **nearside rear axle in front of** (further up court than) the front of his opponent's chair.
- If a player *crosses the path* of an opponent legally, he then has right of way over that opponent. The opponent will then be responsible for any contact that results.



**BLUE has rear axles in front of RED**

Figure E.1 Legal Crossing The Path by Blue 6



Before *crossing the path* in front of Red 4, Blue 6 must have his nearside rear axle in front of (further forward than) the front of Red 4's chair.

Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.6.2.



In this photo, the ORANGE player has legally **crossed the path** of her BLUE opponent.

ORANGE has her rear near-side axle in advance of (further forward than) the frontmost point of the chair of her BLUE opponent.

In this situation, the BLUE defender will be responsible for any contact with her ORANGE opponent.

The same rule applies even if ORANGE does NOT have the ball.

Photo: Courtesy of Sports and Spokes  
© Paralyzed Veterans of America, Sports 'n Spokes.

### Important Note:

The player who legally *crosses the path* of an opponent does **NOT** have to *cover the path* of that opponent.

(continued ..)

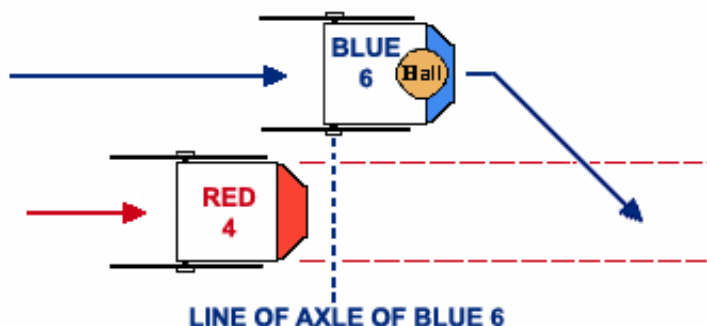


Crossing the path (continued ...)

### CASEBOOK EXAMPLE 1: LEGAL CROSSING THE PATH BY THE PLAYER WITH THE BALL

- To **legally** cross the path of an opponent who is within braking distance, the player with the ball must not turn into the opponent's path until he has his **nearside** large axle **in front of** (further up court than) the front of his opponent's chair.
  - If the player with the ball turns (crosses the path) legally, he has right of way over the defender. Any contact that results would be the responsibility of the defender.

Figure E.2 Legal Crossing The Path by the Player With The Ball



Blue 6 has the ball. He is being defended by Red 4.

Before *crossing the path* in front of Red 4, Blue 6 must have his nearside rear axle in front of (further up court) than Red 4.

If Blue 6 crosses the path legally and contact occurs, then Red 4 will be responsible for the contact.

Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.6.2

### Here is a photo sequence of BLUE 11 who legally crosses the path of WHITE 4

Original photos by Matthew Wells for IWBF. Used by permission. Added graphic by Ross Dewell



BLUE 11 gets his rear axle in front of WHITE 4



BLUE 11 then turns legally across the path of WHITE 4. WHITE 4 will be responsible for any contact that occurs.

The rules for *crossing the path* are the same BOTH for a player **with** the ball and for a player who does **not** have the ball.

It is important to note that the *crossing the path* rules apply when the player starts to cross from a position within his own braking distance of the path and braking area of the opponent

If the crossing move is **started** far enough away (ie beyond braking distance) in time to create a new straight line direction that crosses the opponent's path, this becomes a **converging paths** situation, and **not** a *crossing the path* situation. This is explained in detail in another section.

(continued...)

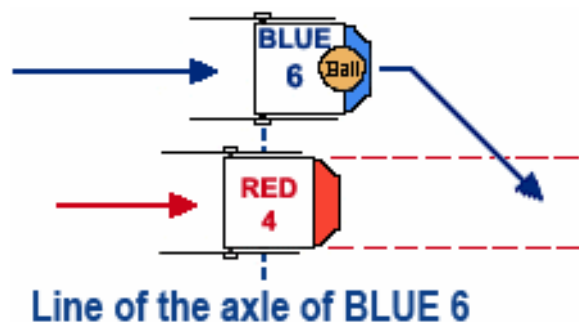


Crossing the path (continued ...)

## CASEBOOK EXAMPLE 2: ILLEGAL CROSSING THE PATH BY THE PLAYER WITH THE BALL

A player who *crosses the path* **before** he has his axles in front of his opponent will usually be responsible for any contact that results.

*Figure E.3* **Illegal Crossing The Path by The Player With The Ball**



Blue 6 has the ball. Blue 6 has attempted to cross into the path of Red 4 too early, before getting the nearside rear axle in front of the chair of Red 4.

**If contact occurs**, this is *Illegal Crossing the Path* by Blue 6. Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.6.2.

### NOTE:

The rules for **crossing the path** are the same for a player with the ball or a player who does not have the ball.

Here is a photo sequence of BLUE 5 who does not have the ball and who illegally attempts to cross the path of White 12.

Photos by Matthew Wells for IWBF. Used by permission.



**1.** BLUE 5 is level with WHITE 12 but he does not have his rear axle not in front of the front of the chair of WHITE 12.



**2.** BLUE 5 attempts to cross the path too early and turns into WHITE 12 who has a legal position.



**3.** BLUE 5 has **illegally** contacted WHITE 12.

**Decision:** Foul on BLUE 5 for an illegal attempt to cross the path.

The same rules would apply to this off-ball *crossing the path* situation if BLUE 5 had the ball. It would be an offensive foul on BLUE 5.

### Notes:

- In this *crossing the path* attempt by BLUE 5, WHITE 12 does not have to *cover-the-path* of BLUE 5 to have a legal position. This not a *converging paths* situation. Even if it was, it is **off ball** so all WHITE 12 would have to do is *get there first*. Clearly, he has.
- WHITE 12 is always allowed to move on a **parallel** path to an opponent.
- BLUE 5 was never far enough away from WHITE 12 for this to have changed to a **Converging Paths** situation (see next section).

(continued...)

Crossing the path (continued ...)

## CROSSING THE PATH OR CONVERGING PATHS?

### 1. ON THE BALL: GUARDING THE BALL CARRIER

If the ball carrier changes direction across the path of an opponent who was on a parallel path, but he makes the turn far enough away to allow the defender time to avoid contact, this becomes a *Converging Paths* situation, rather than a *Crossing The Path* situation. The ball carrier has made a legal turn.

IF the player who changes direction has to push **more than his braking distance** to enter the path of the opponent, this situation becomes *converging paths*, not *crossing the path*.

Look at the example in *Figure E.4*.

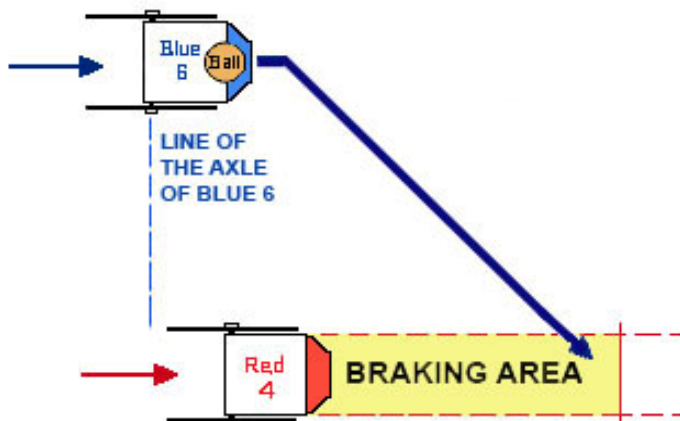
BLUE 6 who has the ball, and defender RED 4 are moving approximately parallel to one another and a couple of chair-widths apart. BLUE 6 changes direction and establishes a new straight-line path across the path and in front of RED 4. He allows RED 4 time to avoid contact.

RED 4 will be responsible for any contact that occurs, even if BLUE 6 changed direction before getting his nearside rear axle in front of RED 4.

#### Rationale:

- **Blue 6 has changed direction far enough away from Red 4 to make this a *Converging Paths* situation.**
- Blue 6 has established a new straight-line path before entering the path of Red 4.
- **Red 4 is responsible for contact even though Blue 6 may have entered the braking area of Red 4.**
- Red 4 must now obey the rules for *Guarding The Ball Carrier*.

*Figure E.4: Blue 6 has the ball*



Blue 6 changes direction before getting an axle in front of Red 4.

Blue 6 establishes a new straight-line path heading towards the path of Red 4.

The distance to the path of Red 4 is **greater than the braking distance** of Blue 6

**Blue 6 has established a new straight line path. This is now a converging paths situation.**

#### Decision:

To play legal defence, defender Red 4 must establish a legal position by either *covering the path* of the ball carrier Blue 6 or by allowing Blue 6 time to avoid contact.

Reference: IWBFB Rulebook - Article 33.6.2 and 3

#### Comment:

This is now a **Converging Paths** situation. Blue 6 has established a new straight-line path, on a converging path with Red 4.

Where Blue 6 will enter the path of Red is beyond the braking distance for Blue 6.

If Blue 6 had time to stop because the path of Red 4 was beyond the braking distance for Blue 6, then Red 4 also had time to avoid contact. Red 4 must follow the rules for **Guarding the player who has the ball**.

(continued ..)

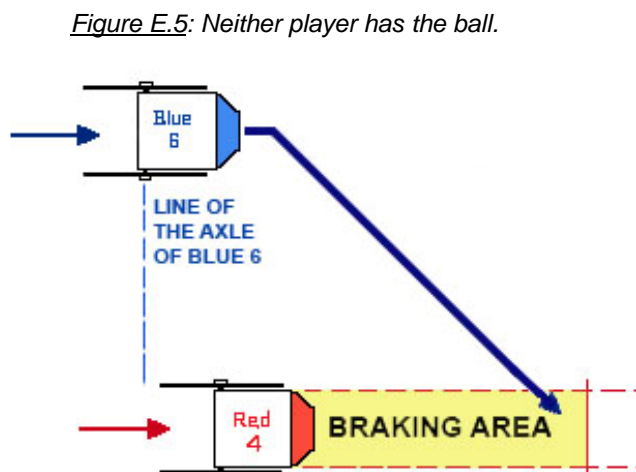
Crossing the path (continued ...)

## 2. OFF THE BALL

Let's look at the same movement by the two players from *Figure E.4*. This time, in *Figure E.5*, neither player has the ball.

Opponents BLUE 6 and RED 4 are moving approximately parallel to one another. They are more than braking distance away from each other. BLUE 6 changes direction and establishes a new straight-line path across the path and in front RED 4

Blue 6 changes direction **before** getting an axle in front of Red 4. Blue 6 has to push for more than his braking distance to enter the path of Red 4 and so he has established a new straight-line path before entering the path of Red 4.



Because Blue 6 changed direction more than braking distance away from the path of Red 4, Red 4 has been given equal time and opportunity to avoid contact. This is no longer a *Crossing The Path* situation. Blue 6's new path means that the paths of Blue 6 and Red 4 will intersect on *converging* paths. Who is responsible for any contact that occurs when Blue 6 and Red 4 each attempt to the same position on the floor?

### Decision:

This is a *Converging Paths* situation where neither player has the ball and so each player only has to *Get There First* to establish a legal position. *Reference: IWBFB Rulebook - Articles 33.5.1; 33.5.1*

### Rationale:

Blue 6 has changed direction far enough away from Red 4 to make this a *Converging Paths* situation. Both players must now obey the rules for *Converging Paths Off the ball* – i.e. *Who Got There First?*

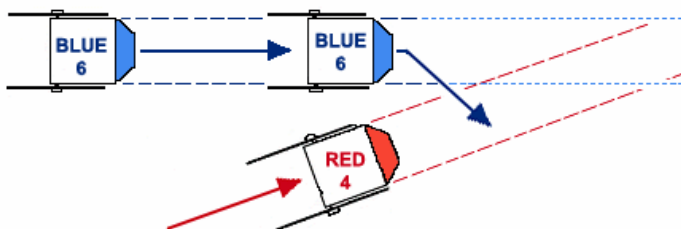
### Comments:

- Compare this situation to the *Crossing The Path* situation in *Figure E.3* where the two players are moving very close together before one changes direction.
- The distance between the chairs when one player changes direction is the important difference between *Figure E.3* and the situations described in *Figures E.4* and *E.5*.

## CHANGING FROM CONVERGING PATHS TO CROSSING THE PATH

What happens when a player on a converging path with an opponent suddenly changes direction and crosses the path of an opponent? This happens frequently in wheelchair basketball.

*Figure E.6* Neither player has the ball.



In *Figure E.6*, Blue 6 and Red 4 are on **converging paths**. But then, when the two chairs are almost level, Blue 6 **changes direction** and **crosses the path** of Red 4.

**Decision:** When Blue 6 changed direction, he changed the situation to one of *Crossing The Path*. Instead of *Who Got There First?*,

the principles of **Crossing The Path** must now be observed by Blue 6, i.e. Blue 6 must have his rear axle in front of Red 4 before changing direction. *Reference: IWBFB Rulebook - Article 33.6.2.*

**Comment:** In *Figure E.6* above, if Blue 6 changes direction and establishes a new straight line path that is converging with the path of Red 4, and if Blue 6 made this change of direction before getting his axle in front of the chair of Red 4, then this new path must be established in time for Red 4 to avoid contact.

If Blue 6 is successful in doing this, then a new *Converging Paths* situation will have been established, governed by the **OFF BALL** principle *Who Got There First?*

## Section F

# Head-On Collision

1. With the ball
2. Without the ball.



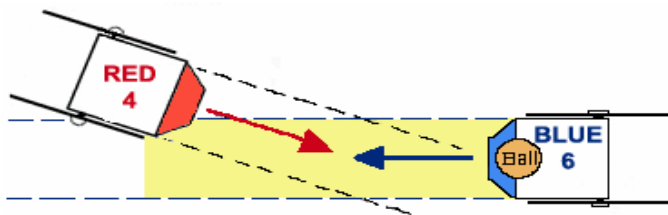
*Photo by Matthew Wells for IWBF. Used by permission.*



## HEAD-ON COLLISION

### 1. WITH THE BALL

Figure F.1 Blue 6 has the ball.



A moving defender is not allowed to collide head on with the player who has the ball.

In Figure F.1, Blue 6 and Red 4 are both moving head on towards each other on a collision course.

Red 4 pushes into the braking area of Blue 6. The yellow shaded area = braking area of Blue 6.

To establish a legal position in this head-on situation, RED 4 must **either** ...

- (a) Stop in time to allow Blue 6 time to avoid contact,  
... or ...
- (b) Cover the path of Blue 6 before contact occurs and RED 4 must be stationary at the moment of contact.

If Red 4 continues on his path and collides head on with Blue 6, then Red 4 has committed a **Pushing** foul, even if the path of Blue 6 has been covered.

(References: IWBF Rulebook - Articles 33.4

In this photo, GREEN 11 who is pushing forwards, must avoid head-on contact with WHITE 12 because WHITE 12 has the ball.

Photo: Courtesy of Wheelchair Basketball Canada and Kevin Bogetti-Smith Photography. Used with permission.



Let's look now at some examples that show how responsibility for head-on contact varies according to whether or not one of the players involved in the contact has possession of the ball

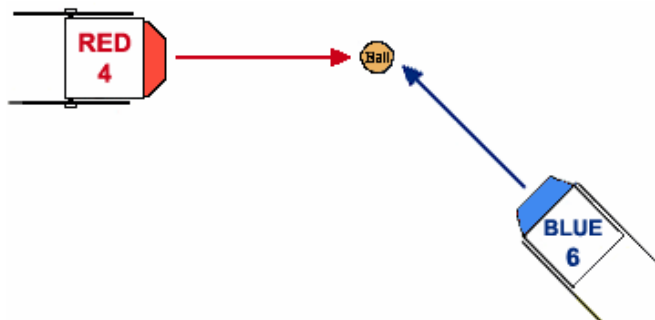
## WITHOUT THE BALL

### 1. HEAD ON CONTACT: Chasing a loose ball

When neither player involved in a head-on collision has the ball, the IWBF official has to consider the actions of each of these players. (A FIBA referee is faced with the same judgement decision.)

Are they chasing a loose ball? Is one player setting a screen? Is the defender attempting to block the path of his opponent? This is not always an easy judgement for an official to make. It requires the official to *read the play* - to understand by observing their **actions** what the players are attempting to do.

Figure F.2



Two opponents Red 4 and Blue 6 are pushing fast from opposite directions to reach a loose ball. They collide head on in a dead heat without either securing the ball. The point of contact is on the front of each chair. **Neither player has secured possession of the ball.**

**Decision:** This may be a **no call**, if neither player secures the ball.

The official may judge this to be Incidental contact (no call) despite the possible severity of the collision if both players had an equal opportunity to secure the ball, and if neither player had secured the ball when contact occurred and if neither player does anything illegal.

(continued ..)



*Head On Collision (continued ...)*

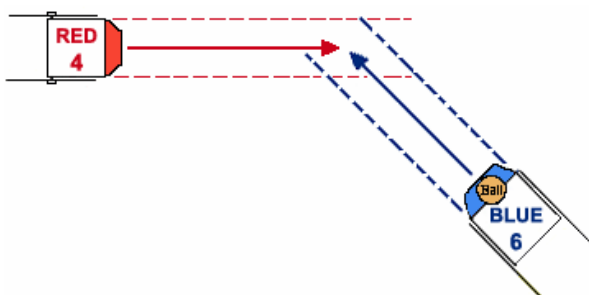
This photo illustrates a *no foul* situation. Both players have pushed quickly towards each other to gain possession of a loose ball. Both have an equal chance to reach the ball. Contact may be severe as they crash head-on but neither has committed a foul.



Photo by Matthew Wells for IWBF. Used by permission.

Consider the SAME situation as *Figure F.2* with two opponents travelling on the SAME paths from opposing directions as in *Figure F.2*. But this time, Blue 6 has the ball.

*Figure F.3* Blue 6 has the ball



This time, if the SAME contact occurred with players on the same paths as in *Figure F.2*, a foul call would be called against the defender Red 4 (see *Figure F.3*). Red 4 has pushed head-on straight into an opponent Blue 6 **who had the ball** when contact occurred.

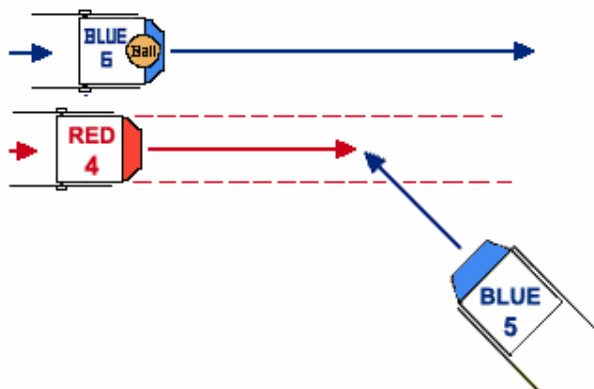
**Decision:** If contact occurs, this is a Pushing foul by Red 4.

(IWBF Rulebook reference: Article 33.4)

## 2. ILLEGAL SCREEN – (Figure F.4)

Let's examine a *head on* contact situation where the head on collision involves an illegal screen.

*Figure F.4* Illegal Screen



Blue 6 has the ball. Defender Red 4 is attempting to pursue opponent Blue 6, when Blue 5 attempts to free Blue 6 by setting a screen on Red 4.

Blue 5 rolls at Red 4 head on and **without stopping** collides with Red 4. The point of contact is on the front of each chair.

**Decision:**

Illegal screen by Blue 5.

To set a legal screen, Blue 5 must be stationary.

Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.8

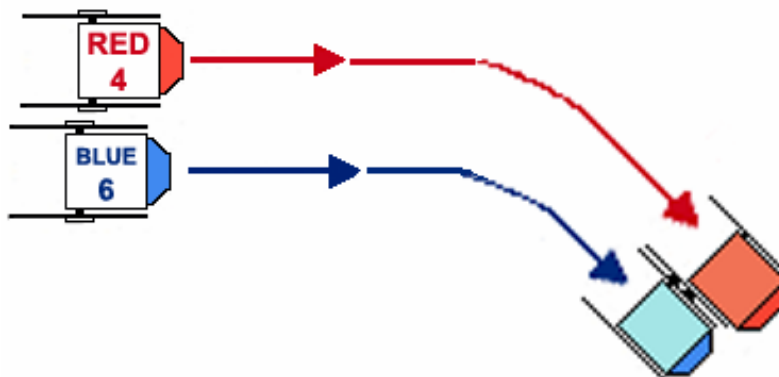
**Comment:** Here the official must make a judgement call about the actions of the offensive player Blue 5. If the ball had not been involved, this may have been a simple head-on collision with neither player at fault, as in *Figure F.2*. A correct call here depends entirely upon the official's ability to read the play correctly, and to recognise what the offensive player BLUE 5 is attempting to do. Was BLUE 5 screening? In this case, YES. Was BLUE 5 trying to reach a loose ball? In this case, NO.

## CONCLUSION

These examples demonstrate conclusively that there **are** differences between the rules for ON BALL and OFF BALL contact. There are different responsibilities for the offence and the defence to avoid contact with a legally-positioned opponent, depending upon whether or not one of the players involved in the contact has the ball.

## Section G

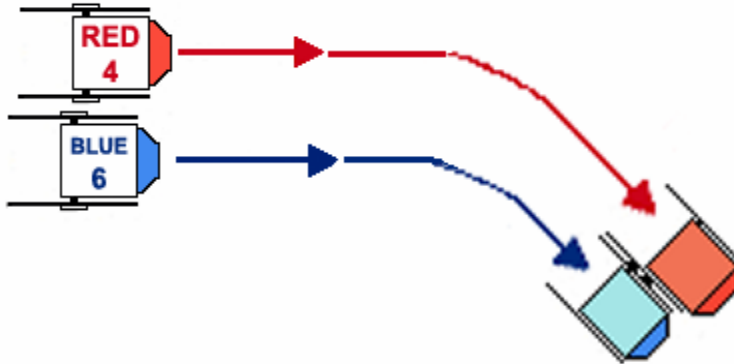
# Curving Paths



## CURVING PATHS

When two opponents are travelling parallel close beside each other, they may contact each other and keep moving. It is not unusual for both chairs to drift into a curving path with both chairs seemingly locked together.

*Figure G.1 Curving Paths*



In *Figure G.1*, the player on the **inside** of the path (Blue 6) is often the one at a disadvantage.

He is usually forced into this curving path by being pushed by the player on the outside (Red 4).

The officials must look closely to determine whether the player on the **outside** of the curve (Red 4) pushed illegally on his outside wheel causing his chair to push into that of his opponent resulting in the curving path. If this occurred, then Red 4 has

gained an advantage by illegally pushing his opponent off his path. In this case, it does not matter which player has the ball.

- It is common for the player on the outside of the curve (Red 4) to let go of both wheels and raise both arms high above their wheels as if to say, "I am not causing this contact." The official must judge whether before letting go of the wheels Red 4 caused contact that resulted in the curving path.
- By removing both hands from the wheels, Red 4 has ignored his responsibility to control his chair.

*Reference: IWBF Rulebook – Articles 33.1; 33.3*

### IMPORTANT CONCEPT:

**A player who lifts both hands off his wheels has ignored and relinquished his responsibility to maintain control of his chair.**

**If he contacts a legally-positioned opponent while he is out of control, then he is responsible for that contact. This includes forcing an opponent into a curving path, or charging into an opponent after shooting or passing the ball.**

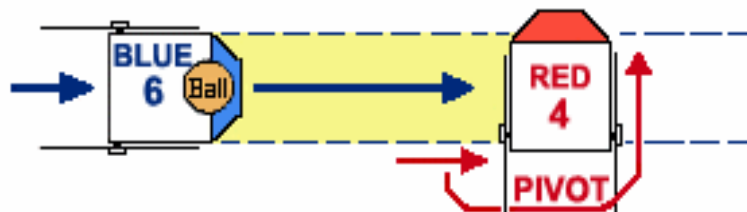
#### **Author's Comment:**

*In the modern game, we see less of this type of contact at advanced levels of play.*

*This type of contact typically seems to occur when less experienced players are involved in the play.*

## Section H

# Pivoting



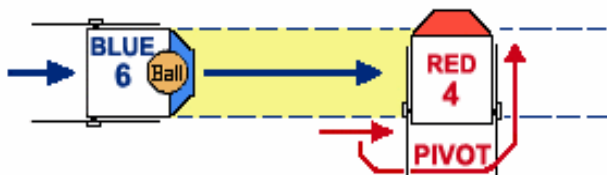
**Red 4 pivots into the path of Blue 6  
from outside the path of Blue 6**



## PIVOTTING

**1. PIVOTTING ACROSS THE PATH:** A stationary **defensive** player who pivots into the path of an opponent who has the ball must obey the rules for *covering-the-path*. He must *cover-the-path* before contact occurs unless his opponent has been given sufficient time to avoid contact - (see *Figure H.1*).

*Figure H.1* Pivoting into the path of a player who has the ball..



Red 4 is **stationary** outside the path of Blue 6 who has the ball. Red 4 has pivoted into the path of Blue 6 and has covered the path of Blue 6. Red 4 is at 90 degrees to the direction of the path of Blue 6. After pivoting, Red 4 has stopped. Blue 6 has maintained his path and crashed into Red 4.

The yellow shaded area = braking area of Blue 6.

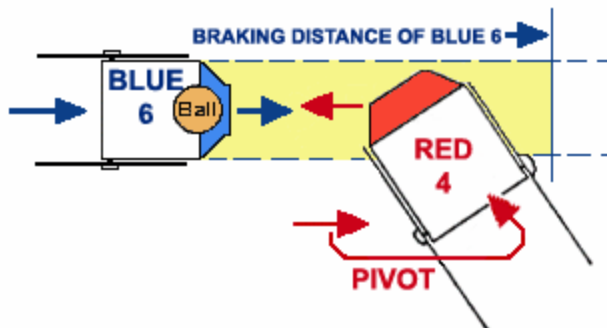
**Decision:** Blue 6 is responsible for contact (CHARGING foul).  
Red 4 covered the path of Blue 6 before contact occurred  
Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.3

### Comments:

- Red 4 must complete the pivot movement **before contact occurs** with Blue 6.
- If Red 4, after covering the path of Blue 6, continues to pivot towards Blue 6 and contact occurs, then Red 4 will be responsible for the contact. This situation is illustrated in *Figure H.2*.
- If the defender can pivot on the spot and maintain his original legal floor position, he retains that legal position. This type of pivot is difficult but it is possible in a wheelchair.

**2. PIVOTTING TOWARDS THE OPPONENT:** A stationary defensive player Red 4 who, after pivoting and covering the path of the opposing ball carrier Blue 6, continues the pivoting movement **towards** BLUE 6 and contacts BLUE 6. By moving out of his wheelchair footprint towards BLUE 6, RED 4 has committed a foul (see *Figure H.2*).

*Figure H.2* Pivoting past square



Red 4 **who was stationary** outside the path of Blue 6 has pivoted into the path of Blue 6 **who has the ball**

**Red 4 has covered the path of Blue 6.**

Red 4 then continues to **pivot** in the direction of Blue 6.

Red 4 is still pivoting towards Blue 6 when Blue 6 who has maintained his path crashes into Red 4.

The yellow shaded area = braking area of Blue 6.

**Decision:**  
Red 4 is responsible for contact. Red 4 has committed a PUSHING foul.  
After covering the path of Blue 6, Red 4 is not entitled to continue to move towards Blue 6.  
(Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Articles 33.4; 33.3)

**Comment:** This is often an extremely difficult judgement call for the official.  
At the end of the pivot, very slight movement towards the opponent which has not significantly changed a situation where the ball carrier had a clear responsibility to avoid contact may be considered incidental

(continued ..)

*Pivoting: (continued ...)*

## Comment about Figure H.2

Note these decisions:

If we vary the situation in *Figure H.2*, then there would be different responsibility for contact depending on:

- (a) whether or not the ball was involved, and
- (b) who had the ball,

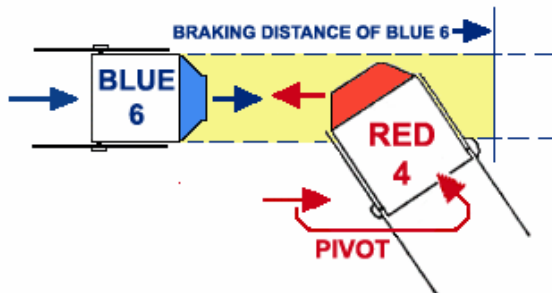
Let's look at each situation.

1. **IF RED 4** from *Figure H.2* **HAS THE BALL**, then Blue 6 would be responsible for contact. This would be a **PUSHING Foul** by Blue 6 committed against the ball carrier Red 4.  
(Reference: *IWBF Rulebook – Article 33.3*)

... OR ...

2. **IF NEITHER PLAYER HAS THE BALL** (*Figure H.4*)

*Figure H.4: Neither player has the ball.*



The yellow shaded area = braking area of Blue 6.

Red 4 pivots towards Blue 6 and into the *braking area* of Blue 6.

**The final decision rests entirely upon the official's ability to read the play** He must be able to recognise the intent of the players involved, and the consequences of the contact.

(Reference: *IWBF Rulebook – Articles 33.3; 33.4*)

In *Figure H.4*, the official has a judgement call to make. There are a number of possible decisions. These are:

- (a) If **neither** player has the ball, then either player may be responsible for this contact. Red 4 is entitled to pivot **on the spot**.

However this will depend upon two things:

- (i) Whether while pivoting Red 4 maintained his position and pivoted basically on the spot, or
- (ii) Whether while pivoting, Red 4 significantly shifted his position to assume a new position on the floor.  
If so, this movement to a new position will be covered by the rules governing **LEGAL POSITION**.

- (b) It may be a "no call".

For example, both players may have been attempting to reach a loose ball which had rolled between their chairs. If the contact occurred before either had secured the ball, and neither player did anything other than try to reach the ball, then nothing illegal may have occurred. The contact in this case may even be quite severe, but a 'no call' may still be the result.

- (c) It may be an illegal screen by RED 4 if the Blue team, but not Blue 6, had the ball.

The Screener must be stationary

(Reference: *IWBF Rulebook – Article 33.8*)

- (d) It may be a pushing foul by BLUE 6.

(Reference: *IWBF Rulebook – Article 33.4.6*)

### Comment:

*Although there are a number of possible decisions in this situation, there are rules to cover all the possibilities. The official must decide which rule is appropriate in each case.*

## Section I

# Guarding Stationary Opponents



**Australians Troy Sachs (5) and Brad Ness (15)  
guarding a stationary Patrick Anderson (Canada)**

*Photo: Courtesy of Wheelchair Basketball Canada  
and Kevin Bogetti-Smith Photography. Used with permission.*

# GUARDING STATIONARY OPPONENTS

When guarding a stationary opponent, who may or may not have the ball, a defender can position his chair as close as possible short of contact.

The defender must respect the following principles:

1. A stationary player is entitled to the space on the court occupied by his wheelchair.  
(Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.3)
2. "An opponent may not place his wheelchair between the rear wheels of an opponent's chair."  
(Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.3)



## Example:

In this photo, Green No.15 (Brad Ness - Australia) can take a position as close as possible short of contact next to a **stationary** opponent White 12 (Patrick Anderson – Canada) who has the ball. In fact, in this situation, it does not matter whether White 12 has the ball or not. Green 15 must not contact White 12 in taking up this position.

It does not matter which way Green 15 is facing in relation to White 12. In IWBF basketball, a player does not have to be facing the opponent to have a legal position. In this photo, Green 15 has a legal defensive position with his back to White 12. He has his arm extended approximately within his wheelchair cylinder.

Green 5 (Troy Sachs – Australia) also has a legal guarding position immediately behind the chair of White 12.

*Photo: Courtesy of Wheelchair Basketball Canada and Kevin Bogetti-Smith Photography. Used with permission.*

## WHAT IF THE STATIONARY OPPONENT BEGINS TO MOVE TO A NEW POSITION?

In the situation in the above photo, if White 12 moves to a new position, and defender Green 15 moves to re-establish a new legal position in relation to his opponent, the principles governing **guarding moving players** will apply.

These principles will vary according to whether or not the opponent White 12 has the ball. Let's look at both possibilities.

### 1. If White 12 has the ball

Green 15 must either *cover-the-path* or *allow time/distance to avoid contact*.  
Green 15 can move to maintain his legal position. (Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.3)

### 2. If White 12 does *not* have the ball

Green 15 must either:

(a) *Get to the new position first* before White 12, subject to the various requirements of Article 33.5

or ...

(b) Obey the *Crossing-the-path* rules **if he changes direction** while attempting to cut across into the path of White 12 (Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.6)

(continued ...)



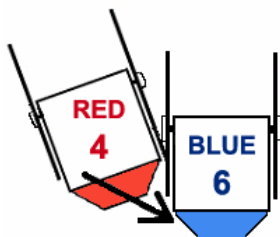
Stationary Opponents (Continued)

## Casebook Examples:

### COMMON TYPES OF WHEELCHAIR SPECIFIC FOULS ON STATIONARY OPPONENTS

#### Example 1. Holding By Pushing Against The Side Of An Opponent's Chair

Figure I.1 Holding



#### Both players are stationary

Red 4's chair is touching the side of Blue 6's chair.

Red 4 is pushing on his outside wheel to maintain the contact with Blue 6's chair in order to prevent Blue 6 from moving.

Both players are held on the spot by the contact.

#### Decision: HOLDING foul by Red 4.

HOLDING is a foul committed on a stationary opponent.

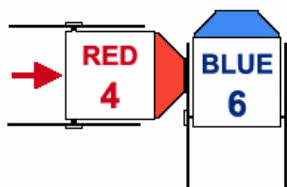
(Reference: IWBF Rulebook Definition - Article 33.13 - Holding)

**Comment:** If Red 4 was pushing Blue 6 sideways, this would be a PUSHING Foul.

(Reference: IWBF Rulebook Definition - Article 33.14 - Pushing)

## 2. Holding With The Footrests

Figure I.2 Holding With The Footrests



Red 4 has pushed his footrests into the side of stationary opponent Blue 6's chair to prevent Blue 6 from moving. Both players are stationary, held on the spot by the contact.

#### Decision: HOLDING foul by Red 4.

In this photo, WHITE 7 has pushed into the side of RED and is preventing RED from moving.

Taking his hands off his wheels means that WHITE 7 is not taking responsibility for his chair. This is a HOLDING foul by WHITE 7.

Photo by Matthew Wells for IWBF. Used by permission.



## 3. Pushing and Turning The Shooter's Chair Away From The Basket On A Shot

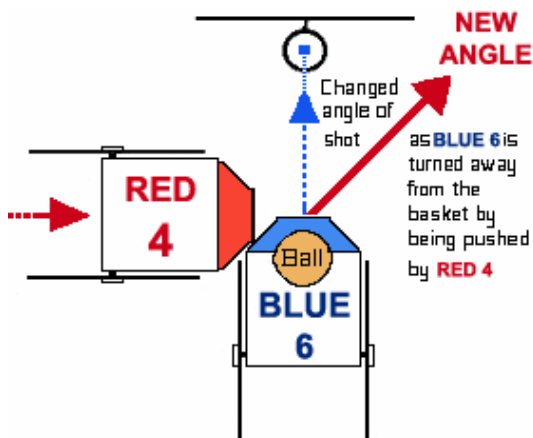


Figure I.3 Pushing and Turning The Shooter's Chair

Blue 6 has the ball. Blue 6 is stationary and about to shoot. Red 4 pushes the side of the footrests of Blue 6 and turns Blue 6's chair away from the basket.

#### Decision: PUSHING Foul by Red 4.

#### Comment

This is a very common foul in wheelchair basketball.

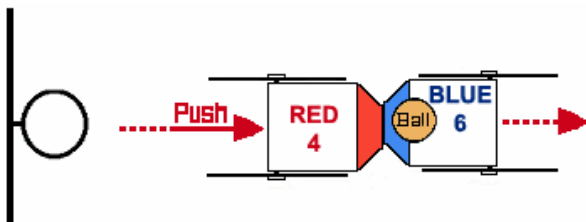
The **baseline** official must be aware that during shooting action close to the basket he may miss seeing this type of contact if he watches the flight of the ball and ignores what is happening at floor level. The **baseline** official must **keep eyes down on the chairs**.

(continued ...)

Casebook Examples: Common Wheelchair Fouls: Stationary Opponents (continued)

#### 4. Pushing The Shooter's Chair Backwards On A Shot

Figure I.4 Pushing The Shooter's Chair Backwards



Blue 6 has the ball. Blue 6 is stationary and is about to shoot. Red 4 pushes forwards into the footrests of Blue 6, and pushes Blue 6's chair backwards as he shoots.



Photo by Matthew Wells for IWBF. Used by permission.

**Decision:** PUSHING Foul by Red 4.  
(Reference: IWBF Rulebook Definition - Article 33.14 - Pushing)

In this photo, the BLUE defender appears to be pushing forwards into the foot rests of the WHITE shooter. If the official decides that the defender has disadvantaged the shooter by pushing the shooter's chair backwards during the shot, this is a Pushing foul. If the ball has just been released when contact occurs but the official decides that the shooter has not yet regained balance, this would be a foul in the act of shooting.

**Comment:** [Figure I.4](#) Pushing The Shooter's Chair Backwards

**This type of contact is very common in wheelchair basketball.**

Officials need to be aware of this type of contact. Contact by the defender may appear slight but often a significant disadvantage is caused for the shooter whose chair is pushed backwards during the act of shooting. This is a foul.

The danger is that the baseline official may be looking up at the ball and the defender's arms and not be aware of the gentle but illegal push to the shooter's footrest by the footrest of the defender at floor level and below the eye line vision of the official. It is easy to miss seeing this often soft but significant contact.

The Centre official may need to assist with this call in a crowded restricted area.

#### 5. Holding An Opponent By Pushing Between The Rear Wheels

Figure I.5: Holding by pushing between the rear wheels



Blue 6 is **stationary**.  
Opponent Red 4 pushes between the rear wheels of Blue 4 and holds his chair so that Blue 4 cannot move away.

**Decision:** HOLDING Foul by Red 4.

**Comment:** The WHITE defender in this photo has pushed from behind under the seat of the stationary GREEN player who has the ball. This makes it very difficult for the GREEN player to manoeuvre his chair. This is a HOLDING foul by the WHITE player.

This type of foul is less common in the modern game because many chairs have one or two rear castor wheels. This has made it difficult to push under an opponent's chair from behind. However, this type of contact still occurs.



Photo by Matthew Wells for IWBF. Used by permission.

## Section J

# Screening

Screens - Stationary Opponents  
Screens - Moving Opponents



**Legal stationary screen by Blue 14 on a moving opponent**

*Photo by Matthew Wells for IWBF. Used by permission.*

# SCREENING

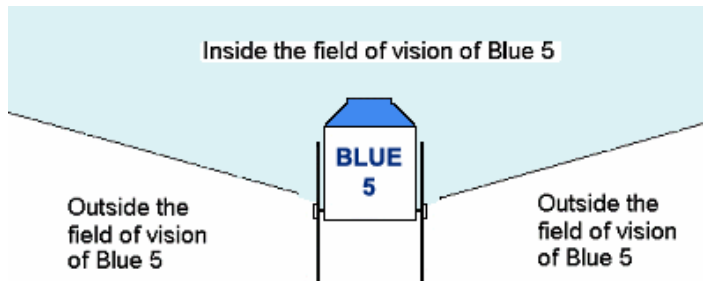
## DEFINITION: SCREENING

**SCREENING** is the action of an **offensive** player who positions his wheelchair in a **stationary** position near an opponent in an effort to prevent that opponent from reaching a desired position on the floor.

In **FIBA** basketball, the FIBA screening rules vary according whether a screen is set *inside* or *outside* a player's *field of vision*. To understand the discussions that follow, you need to understand what is meant by *field of vision*. The term *field of vision* is illustrated in *Figure H.1*

## FIELD OF VISION

*Figure J.1 FIBA Concept of the Field of Vision*



Whether the screen is set *inside* or *outside* the opponent's visual field is not relevant in **IWBF** screening rules. This is different to the **FIBA** screening rules.

In FIBA basketball, the field of vision of Blue 5 is determined by what a player can see when he is looking straight ahead. His peripheral (side) vision allows him to see what is approximately to either side of him.

In contrast to FIBA, the **IWBF** screening rules are concerned **only** with Screens set on either *moving* players or *stationary* players, and not whether the screen is set within or outside field of vision. Whether screens are set inside or outside the opponent's visual field is not relevant in IWBF basketball.

## 1. SCREENING A STATIONARY OPPONENT

In **IWBF** basketball when a screen is set **either inside or outside** a **stationary** opponent's visual field, the screen can be set **as close as possible** short of contact.

This is different to the FIBA rule where the Screening rule requirements vary according to whether the screen is set inside or outside the opponent's visual field.

An important similarity to FIBA is that in IWBF basketball the screener's wheelchair **must be stationary** when setting the screen. (*Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.8*)

### NOTE THESE VERY IMPORTANT POINTS:

1. The requirement that the screener's wheelchair must remain stationary requires some explanation.

If, after he has set his screen and is stationary, the screener then moves to reset his screen because the opponent has moved, **the screener again must allow the opponent time and distance to avoid contact** when taking the new screening position.

2. The official must decide whether he is judging a **Screening** situation (i.e. where the **offensive** player who sets the screen is required to be **stationary**) or whether he is officiating a **Guarding** situation where both of the opposing players involved in the situation are **moving**. There are different rules for each of these situations. The officials will often need to judge what the offensive player without the ball is attempting to do. Is he attempting to obtain a better position for himself (who got there first?) or is he attempting to prevent a defender from getting past him (Screening rules – time and distance).

(continued ...)



Screening (continued ... )

## 2. SCREENING A MOVING OPPONENT

The first requirement of the screener in both IWBF and FIBA basketball is that ***the screener must remain stationary***.

In wheelchair basketball, the screener must *either* give the opponent time and distance to avoid contact, *or* the screener must *cover the path* of the opponent.

**The FIBA concept of screens set either within or outside an opponent's visual field does not apply in IWBF basketball.** The only principle to consider in IWBF basketball is whether the player being screened is moving or stationary.

The principle *If he had time to get there, then you had time to avoid the contact* applies here (see the *Comment* below).

When a screen is set on a **moving** opponent, the official must consider the following:

1. Did the screener establish a legal position in relation to the opponent?  
To do this, the screener must either *cover-the-path*, or *allow time / distance to avoid contact*.
2. If the screener was moving head-on at the opponent, did the screener stop in time to allow the opponent time and distance to avoid contact?

If the screener fulfils these requirements, then the screen is legal.  
(Reference: *IWBF Rulebook – Article 33.8*)



*Photo by Matthew Wells for IWBF. Used by permission.*

However, If Player B sets a legal screen on a moving opponent Player A, then once Player A has moved close to the screener **within the braking distance** (i.e., the distance required to avoid contact by stopping or changing direction), the screener Player B must keep his screen stationary. If the screener Player B then moves that screen and **significantly alters his position in relation to Player A**, then Player B may be responsible for any contact that results.

In this photo, BLUE 14 has set a legal stationary screen on his moving White team opponent.

### Comment:

*Here it is appropriate to repeat the general principle mentioned earlier:*

***If Player B had time to establish a legal position in the path of opponent Player A, then that opponent Player A had an equal chance to avoid contact.***

*When this principle is applied to SCREENING, the legal position is obtained by allowing the player being screened enough time and distance to avoid contact.*

## Section K

# The Act Of Shooting

When is a player in the *Act of Shooting*?

When does the *Act Of Shooting* end?



**Patrick Anderson – Canada**  
**Shooting the wheelchair skyhook**

*Photo: Courtesy of Wheelchair Basketball Canada  
and Kevin Bogetti-Smith Photography. Used with permission.*

# THE ACT OF SHOOTING

## 1. WHEN IS A PLAYER CONSIDERED TO BE IN THE ACT OF SHOOTING?

The act of shooting begins when the player begins the motions that habitually precede the release of the ball on a shot at goal. A player may be considered to be in the act of shooting if:

- (a) He holds the ball up in one or both hands with full or partial extension of the arm(s) and with the wrist cocked in the shooting position in preparation for shooting the ball  
... Or ...
- (b) He holds the ball in one or both hands and commences an underhand scooping action in the direction of the basket.

The arm of the player with the ball might be held by the defence so that the player cannot shoot the ball; yet he may be making an attempt to shoot even though the arm is not in the classic shooting position.

(Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Articles 15.1; 15.2; 15.3)

The IWBF and FIBA interpretation is that **the gathering of the ball** in order to shoot may be regarded as the beginning of an attempt to shoot. The following sequence illustrates this.

Original photos by Matthew Wells for IWBF. Used by permission.



- 1. WHITE 8 has gathered the ball.  
The act of shooting has started.**



- 2. WHITE 8 continues the act of shooting by extending his arm to propel the ball onto the backboard.**



A decision on whether the act of shooting has started often relies on the official's ability to *read the play*, i.e. to recognise what the player with the ball is attempting to do.

This photo (*left*) shows White No.4 (Dave Durepos - Canada) may be considered to be in the act of shooting. He is holding the ball with both hands in a shooting position. He is looking at the basket to judge his shot. If he is contacted by the defence while in this position, and especially if any arm movement to propel the ball has commenced, a foul should normally be called; and when determining the penalty for the foul, **the player fouled (White 4) should be considered to have been in the act of shooting.**

Photo: Courtesy of Wheelchair Basketball Canada and Kevin Bogetti-Smith Photography. Used with permission.

(continued ..)



*The Act of Shooting (continued ...)*

### **Question: Is he shooting or is he going to pass?**



The official calling the foul may sometimes be in doubt about whether the player with the ball was going to shoot or to pass. In these circumstances, if the foul has taken away the opportunity for the player with the ball to shoot, the official should give the benefit of the doubt to the player with the ball and penalise the foul with free throws.

This Canadian player, Chris Stoutenburg, is looking at the basket and he is holding the ball in the shooting position but he can still pass. If he begins an arm movement and is fouled in this situation, the contact should be penalised as a shooting foul. The benefit of the doubt should go to the player with the ball.

In 2005, **FIBA** strongly emphasised that in **FIBA** basketball, the act of shooting commences when the player **gathers the ball** to commence the lay-up. The gathering of the ball can also signify the beginning of the act of shooting in **IWBF** wheelchair basketball. The wheelchair player who has gathered the ball in order to roll in for a lay-up is considered to be in the act of shooting.

- see the next section - Floor Position and The Opportunity To Shoot

*Photo: Courtesy of Wheelchair Basketball Canada and Kevin Bogetti-Smith Photography. Used with permission.*

An offensive rebounder in wheelchair basketball who taps the ball towards the opponents' basket is considered to be in the act of shooting.

### **Floor Position And The Opportunity To Shoot**

The player's floor position is a most important consideration for the officials when determining whether a player was in the act of shooting. A player who catches a defensive rebound and pivots, facing up court, holding the ball in a shooting position with his wrist cocked, is unlikely to be attempting a full court shot, except perhaps in the final seconds of a period of play. This is a situation that relies on the official's ability to *read the play*, i.e. to recognise what the player with the ball is attempting to do.

The player may not have started to actually push the ball towards the basket, but still may be considered to be in the act of shooting. For example, the player may have gathered the ball and be rolling the last few metres towards the basket and, in the judgement of the official, is ready to shoot. If he is fouled in this situation, the official should normally award two shots. The official needs to **read the play** to judge whether the player was in both a floor position and /or a play situation where a shot was the most likely play.

### **NOTE THESE TWO SHOOTING SITUATIONS**

- **Situation 1:** Offensive player Red 5 wheels into the restricted area directly under the basket where he receives a pass over the outstretched hand of defender Blue 7. Red 5 cocks his hand in the direction of the basket simultaneously with the receipt of the ball and is struck on the arm by Blue 7 before the ball leaves the hand of Red 5. The shot fails to score.

**Decision:** A foul is charged to Blue 7. Two free throws are awarded to Red 5.

- **Situation 2:** Red 4 wheels into the vicinity of the basket when he receives a waist high pass while beneath the outstretched arms of defender Blue 7. Blue 7 immediately brings his arms down establishing contact with Red 4 as Red 4 begins to move his shooting hand up towards the basket, but not necessarily in the classic cocked shooting position.

**Decision:** A foul is charged to Blue 7. Two free throws are awarded to Red 4.

**Rationale:** A foul should be called at the slightest indication that the arms are being moved upward towards the basket. Any benefit of the doubt should go to the shooter.

*(continued ..)*



The Act Of Shooting (continued ..)

## Example: Is this the Act of Shooting?



Photo by Matthew Wells for IWBF. Used by permission.

The start of the act of shooting in a lay-up is considered to be the **gathering** (catching) of the ball off the wheelchair dribble e.g. at the start of a layup.

In this photo, WHITE 8 is not yet propelling or pushing the ball towards the basket but is considered to be in the act of shooting - attempting a lay-up.

WHITE 8 is about to roll into the restricted area. He has gathered the ball and is rolling in for a lay-up. As he rolls into the restricted area, he is holding the ball ready to begin the actual shot. He has his eyes looking up, focussed on the basket.

**WHITE 8 is clearly in the act of shooting.**

**Any defensive contact here on WHITE 8 should be penalised as a shooting foul.**



Photo above by Matthew Wells for IWBF. Used by permission.

This next photo shows a similar situation to the photo above. WHITE 11 is not yet propelling or pushing the ball towards the basket but is considered to be in the act of shooting - attempting a lay-up.

WHITE 11 is about to enter the restricted area, and has his eyes looking up, focussed on the basket. He has *gathered the ball* and is rolling in for a lay-up and as he rolls into the restricted area, he is holding the ball ready to begin the actual shot.

**WHITE 11 is clearly in the act of shooting.**

**Any defensive contact here on WHITE 11 should be penalised as a shooting foul.**



In this photo, WHITE 15 has not released the ball but she is still in the act of shooting.

RED 14 is committing two types of illegal contact:

1. **PUSHING FOUL** – chair contact with the wheels while on Converging Paths, failing to cover the path and ..
2. **ILLEGAL USE OF HANDS** – contact to the left arm of WHITE 15.

WHITE 15 is attempting to shoot but the illegal contact has made the **release** of the shot impossible.

**Officials should penalise this contact as a foul committed on an opponent in the act of shooting.**

Photo: Courtesy of Kevin Bogetti-Smith Photography.  
Used with permission.

(continued ...)

*The Act Of Shooting (continued ... )*

## 2. WHEN DOES THE ACT OF SHOOTING END?

In wheelchair basketball, the act of shooting continues until the shooter has completed the shooting action (follow through) **and has regained his balance.** (Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 15.1;15.2;15.3)

If a shooter is fouled **while still off balance moments after the shot has left his hand**, he is considered to be still in the act of shooting.

### THE MOMENT THAT THE ACT OF SHOOTING ENDS WILL VARY ACCORDING TO THE DEGREE OF DISABILITY OF THE SHOOTER.

Judging the end of the act of shooting can be different in IWBF basketball when compared to FIBA basketball.

- FIBA has a concept that the act of shooting continues after the shot is released **until the player who has jumped to shoot returns to the floor.**
- The equivalent concept in IWBF basketball is that the act of shooting continues after the shot is released **until the shooter has regained his balance.**

The time that the shooter needs to recover balance may vary according to the disability of the shooter. A 4.5 player may regain balance almost as soon as he releases the ball. However, a low point player may be off balance for a moment or two longer after he releases the shot – that is, he may take a moment longer to regain his balance compared to a higher point player.

The experienced wheelchair basketball official can recognise when a player has regained his balance. This recognition is essential when judging when the act of shooting has ended.

#### **Comments: Regaining Balance**

1. *The regaining of balance in IWBF wheelchair basketball, signifying the end of the follow through, can often be significantly different to that situation in FIBA basketball.*
2. *Regaining control of balance following a shot **may** be indicated by a player doing such things as:*
  - (a) *Grabbing the wheels or the side of the chair to steady himself as the ball is released.*
  - (b) *Sitting back upright, or sitting steady and balanced at the completion of the follow-through of his arms*
  - (c) *Placing a hand on the floor to steady himself*
  - (d) *Choosing to remain lying forward with his chest resting on his thighs  
- a low point player may tend to do this.*
3. *Note that:*
  - (a) *The player may not have commenced pushing the ball towards the basket, but may still be considered to be in the act of shooting ..... (e.g., when a player is rolling in for a lay-up) .....*

*... and ...*

  - (b) *The player may have released the ball on a shot but may still be considered to be in the act of shooting if he is still following through and off balance when contact occurs.*

## Section L

# The Three Basic Principles Of Contact



*Photo by Matthew Wells for IWBF. Used by permission.*

# The 3 Basic Principles of Contact

## FIRST BASIC PRINCIPLE OF CONTACT

### Guarding The Player Who Has The Ball

When a defender Player A attempts to establish a legal position in the path of an opponent Player B **who has the ball**, the official must consider the following principles:

#### 1. When both players are MOVING:

(a) Did defender Player A cover the path of ball carrier Player B before contact occurred?

.... Or ...

(b) Was the ball carrier Player B given time and distance to avoid contact?

**Decision:** If the answer to *either* (a) or (b) is **YES**, then the defender Player A has legal position.

#### 2. When the player with the ball is STATIONARY:

The defender Player A can take a position as close as possible to opponent Player B, short of contact, without invading the space occupied by Player B.

## SECOND BASIC PRINCIPLE OF CONTACT

### Guarding A Player Who Does Not Have The Ball

When defender Player A attempts to establish a legal position in front of an opponent Player B **who does not have the ball**, the official must consider the following principles:

#### 1. When both players are MOVING:

Did Player A establish a legal position first by reaching the position before opponent Player B?

**Decision:** If the answer is **YES**, then Player A has legal position.

#### 2. When the player being guarded is STATIONARY:

Player A can take a position as close as possible to opponent Player B, short of contact, without invading the space occupied by Player B. [See also the rules for Screening- see Page H.1]

#### 3. When the defender MOVES after being STATIONARY:

If a stationary defender suddenly moves from within a chair length into the braking area of a moving opponent who does not have the ball, he must allow that opponent time to avoid contact.

## THIRD BASIC PRINCIPLE OF CONTACT

### Screening: Basic Position

The player who sets a screen must be stationary.

#### 1. Screening A Stationary Opponent

The screener can set the screen anywhere as close as possible short of contact.

#### 2. Screening A Moving Opponent

The screener must **either**. (a) *Cover the path* of the opponent being screened, **or ...**

(b) Allow the opponent *time and distance* to avoid contact.



## Contact Situations

### STATIONARY AND MOVING DEFENCE - ON THE BALL AND OFF THE BALL

#### RULES FOR DEFENDERS

##### 1. Stationary Defender v Any Opponent, Both *On the Ball* and *Off the Ball*

If defender *Player B* takes any **stationary** position **anywhere** in opponent *Player A's* path, or anywhere near the opponent, **giving *Player A* time to avoid contact**, then *Player A* is responsible for any resulting contact. (Reference: *IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.4*)

##### 2. Moving Defender v The Player Who Controls The Ball

The defender must *cover the path* of the player with the ball, or allow that player *time to avoid contact*. (Reference: *IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.3*)

##### 3. Moving Defender v An Opponent Who Does NOT Control The Ball

Defender *Player B* who is moving takes a position **in the path** of moving opponent *Player A* who does **not** have the ball. If *defender Player B* is still moving when contact occurs, then *Player B* must **reach the position first** in order to have established a legal guarding position.

*This means that Player B must have part of his wheelchair in the path of Player A. If he succeeds in doing this, then Player B is considered to have a legal position. Player B is entitled to occupy the position that he reached first. Player A must avoid contact with Player B. (Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.5)*

##### 4. Stationary Defender Who Moves into the Braking Area of a Moving Opponent Who Does NOT Control The Ball

Stationary defender *Player B* must allow moving opponent *Player A* time to avoid contact if *Player B* moves into the braking area of *Player A* from a starting position within a chair length of the braking area of *Player A*. **Remember that neither of these players has the ball.** (References: *IWBF Rulebook - Articles 33.5*)

The following principles are extremely important for officials when judging responsibility for contact:

- The requirement that a moving defender must allow **the player with the ball** time and distance to avoid contact is considered to have been fulfilled **once the defender has established a legal floor position**.
- A defender who has **covered the path of the player with the ball** has reached a legal position, and, as a result, he is considered to have given the ball carrier the time and distance needed to avoid contact.

### PRINCIPLES FOR THE OFFENSIVE PLAYER WHO HAS THE BALL

- **The player with the ball must always expect to be guarded.** (Reference: *IWBF Rulebook – Article 33.4.2*)  
This principle is the same in FIBA rules. (Reference: **FIBA Rulebook – Article 33.4.2**)
- **The player with the ball must maintain control of his chair at all times in order to be able to stop or change direction to avoid a defender who has established a legal position in his path.** (Reference: *IWBF Rulebook – Article 33.4.2*)

**Comment:** *If the player with the ball takes his hands off his wheels in order to shoot or pass, he puts at risk his ability to control his chair. He has chosen to relinquish his ability to use his hands to control his chair. The player with the ball remains responsible for the movement of his chair even though he has chosen to remove his hands from his wheels.*

# Appendix

## Supplementary Reading

*All articles in this section are written by Ross Dewell*

- Page M.2**    **Chair Dimensions and *Covering The Path***
- Page N.1**    **The PATH Theory of Contact - Some General Principles**
- Page O.1**    **Time and Distance**
- Page P.1**    **Guarding Situations - The Responsibilities Of The Player With The Ball  
and the Defender In Wheelchair Basketball**
- Page Q.1**    **Legal Defence - Is There A Need To Stop?**
- Page R.1**    **Awareness and Contact**
- Page S.1**    **When Is There No Difference in the Rules for *On-ball* and  
*Off-ball* Contact?**
- Page T.1**    **The Difference In Contact Rules Between IWBF and FIBA**
- Page U.1**    **Disability and Classification Points**
- Page V.1**    **Experienced referees know more than just the rules**
- Page W.1**    **Quick Quiz**

## CHAIR DIMENSIONS

- *Some observations by the author.*

I recorded the measurements of a number of chairs at 1996 Australian National Wheelchair Basketball League matches.

- Allowing for the many individual and unusual chair designs, the sizes in the following diagrams were the approximate **average** measurements.
- The range of sizes were:
  - X: 22 - 25 cms
  - Y: 30 - 33 cms
  - Z: 30 - 33 cms

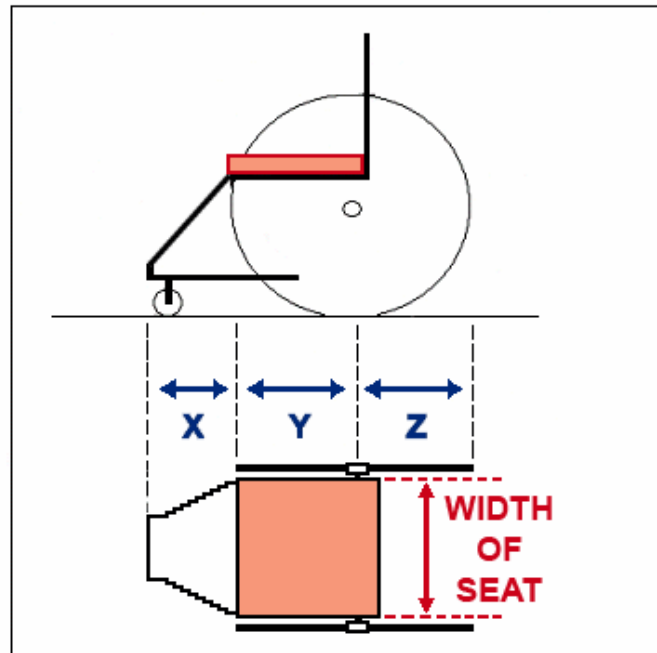
(X, Y and Z refer to the distances in *Figures M.1 and M.2*)

Rear wheel diameters varied from around 56cms up to 66 cms (1996 IWBF rules)  
High point players tended to have the larger diameter wheels.

**The average width of the seat was 40 cms.**

**This means that the average width of the path of the players is consistently about 40 cms, no matter what changes occur in chair designs over time.**

Figure M.1



**Note:** **Distance X** varied from chair to chair.  
This distance measured up to 30 cms in older three-wheeled chairs with only one front castor and an extremely long triangular projection around that front castor.

However, chairs with only one front castor have disappeared from the modern game.  
Most modern chairs have two front castors, and we see rarely the older long front projections.  
The front protector bars on modern chairs wrap snugly around the front of the chair.

(continued ..)

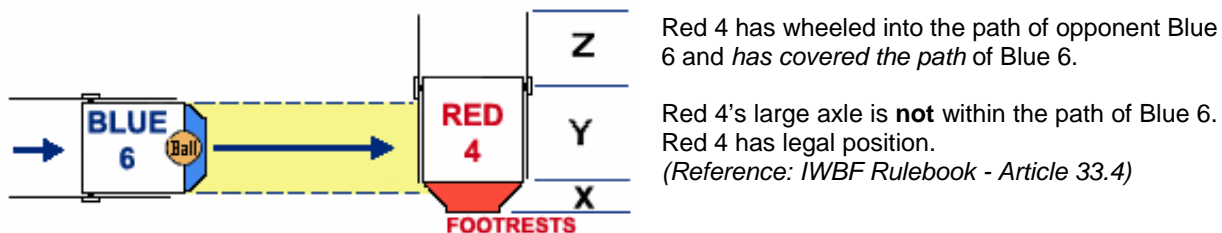
Chair Dimensions (continued .. )

## COVERING THE PATH

When *covering-the-path*, a player can wheel **forwards** into an opponent's path, and cover-the-path **without** getting his rear large wheel axle in the path of the opponent's chair (see *Figure M.2*).

The distance from the front of a chair to its axle (**Distance X + Y** in *Figures M.1 and M.2*) is in most cases greater than the average width of a chair. This is especially true with the current trend in many modern chairs of having a protective bar in a triangular configuration around the front of the footrests, effectively extending the forward projection of the chair.

*Figure M.2*

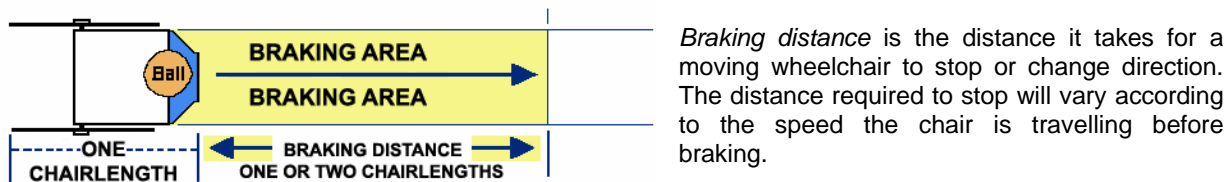


**Note:** The distances X, Y and Z refer to the distances in *Figure M.1* and *Figure M.2*.

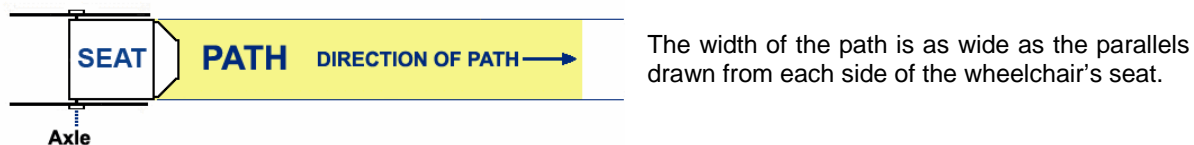
**Distance X** which is the shortest distance of the three measurements is **less** than the **width** of the average measurement of PATH (i.e. the width of the seat).

## BRAKING DISTANCE AND BRAKING AREA

*Braking distance* and *braking area* are both mentioned frequently in *Principles Of Contact In Wheelchair Basketball*.



*Braking area* is that part of a player's path immediately in front of the moving chair and along which the chair will travel while coming to a stop.



**Moving into the path** can mean moving into any part of the opponent's path, including his *braking area*.

**Moving into the path** is different to the more specific *moving into the braking area*.

**Moving into the braking area** implies by definition that the moving player will be unable to stop without contact occurring with the opponent who has moved into his braking area.

There is a correlation between IWBF's *braking distance* and the FIBA concept of the airborne player who must be given room to land. In FIBA basketball, once a player is airborne, no-one can move into his unoccupied landing spot. There are two reasons for this FIBA concept. One involves keeping order and control of the physical nature of the game. The other involves a safety consideration.

Because wheelchairs do not usually leave the floor as part of normal play, the safety consideration involved in the FIBA concept of the airborne player needing room to land safely might appear to be less of an issue in

(continued .. )



*Braking distance and braking area (continued .. )*

wheelchair play. However, a player can be hurt in a heavy collision between two wheelchairs that have collided because of illegal position. So, although IWBF rules may not need to consider the position of an airborne player, the time it takes for a wheelchair to stop safely must be an important consideration in determining the IWBF rules involving legal and illegal chair position.

The concept of keeping order and control of the physical nature of the game is certainly a part of IWBF basketball. *Braking distance* applies the *landing room* concept to wheelchairs. Because the wheelchair player needs his hands to brake and stop, the time needed to get his hands to the wheels to stop the moving chair, and the distance travelled by the wheelchair while this occurs, are important factors in the determination of how *braking distance* is defined.

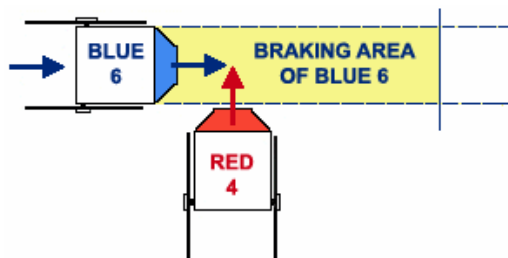
Remember that, as in FIBA basketball, the IWBF player in possession of the ball must always expect to be guarded. He must always be prepared to either stop his wheelchair or change direction to avoid contact with a legally-positioned opponent.

In determining how much distance is needed to bring a fast-moving chair to a stop, I did many tests using an Australian international 3.5 point player to trial stopping distance and change of direction at high speed. *Two chair lengths* was more than enough distance to bring a fast-moving chair to a stop or to allow the player to change direction to avoid a stationary opponent. This was a fortunate outcome because it related nicely to the traditional FIBA concept of *two steps* distance needed to allow a fast moving player to avoid contact. Since I conducted those tests in 1994, wheelchair technology has not added to the distance needed to stop a wheelchair. In fact, lighter chairs have made the *two chair-lengths* a very generous distance.

Once you understand the concepts of *braking distance* and *braking area*, you then need to understand the how these concepts are applied to definitions of legal and illegal defence. Next, I will not discuss all of the details of the IWBF contact rules. I will just look at a comparison between the IWBF concepts of *braking distance* and *braking area* and the FIBA concept of moving into the landing space of an airborne player.

In FIBA basketball, a defender who moves under a moving opponent who has jumped and who has possession of the ball, will be called for a foul if contact occurs because physics and gravity prevent the airborne player from stopping in mid-air – he needs room to stop and land.

Similarly, a wheelchair player who fails to give a moving opponent who has possession of the ball room to stop will be called for a foul because physics and momentum makes stopping impossible without the use of the player's hands. Although there are different physical factors involved, there is a basis for comparison between the FIBA and IWBF situations. If the airborne FIBA player and the moving IWBF player both had legal floor space to stop but this space was taken away from them by an opponent who moved into the landing area, or *braking area*, then that opponent's action was illegal.



Another situation that involves a player moving into an opponent's *braking area* is what I call *wheelchair tripping*. A **stationary** wheelchair player who, at the last moment, moves the front of his chair partially into the *braking area* of a fast moving opponent who has the ball without *covering the path* of that opponent is performing an action that is somewhat like *tripping* in able-bodied sport. Where the player in possession is moving very quickly, the resulting contact can be severe and may result in injury.

The IWBF rules make such action illegal by requiring the defender to *cover-the-path* of the player in possession. If the defender has had time to move across and cover the entire path of the player in possession, then that player in possession is considered to have had a similar time and distance to avoid contact with the defender. If the path has been covered, the defender has a legal position.

Off-ball, the concept is different. IWBF players off-ball only have to reach a position first to be legal. There is no requirement to cover the path to be legal. Being *in the path* is enough. Wheelchair players off ball always have their hands free to change direction or stop their chairs. It is practically impossible for a wheelchair player off ball to move his chair into the path of an opponent without that opponent being able to see the player's move and take evasive action. The only exception may be when the opponent is moving backwards, with his back to his own path, which, although it does occur, is not common. The same rules apply. However, remember that moving from a stationary position into the opponent's *braking area* off-ball can constitute a foul – the *wheelchair tripping* situation described above.

# THE PATH THEORY OF CONTACT

## SOME GENERAL PRINCIPLES

### OVERVIEW

The theory of PATH has clarified responsibility for contact in wheelchair basketball. The IWBF Basketball Rulebook describes its contact rules in terms of Path Theory. This provides IWBF basketball players, coaches, fans and officials for the first time with a definition of exactly what constitutes a legal position on the court. It clearly defines the specific position that a player must have reached to be considered 'legal'. It is a definition that has no exceptions and caters for the ongoing design and development of wheelchairs.

The PRIME requirements in determining whether a player has established a legal position in relation to an opponent are divided in three basic situations:

- 1. GUARDING A PLAYER WHO HAS THE BALL**
- 2. GUARDING A PLAYER WHO DOES NOT HAVE THE BALL**
- 3. SCREENING.**

There are also some wheelchair specific contact situations, such as *Crossing The Path*.

However, this discussion of wheelchair contact principles will confine itself to the three basic situations specified above.

Let's look at each in turn.

### 1. GUARDING THE PLAYER WHO CONTROLS THE BALL

In the IWBF Basketball Rulebook, *Article 33.4.2* states:

*The player with the ball must expect to be guarded and must be prepared to stop or change direction whenever an opponent takes a legal guarding position in front of him.*

IWBF provides clear guidelines about exactly WHERE a defender must be to have established a legal guarding position near an opponent who has the ball.

To determine this, an official considers the following two points:

Either ...

1. The defender must have *covered the path* of the opponent.

.... or ...

2. If the defender did NOT *cover the path*, he needs to have allowed the opponent TIME and DISTANCE to avoid contact.

If a defender has established a legal position in relation to the ball carrier according to either of the above points, then the ball carrier is responsible for any contact that results.

The IWBF rules state that when either of the two criteria above are fulfilled by the defender, then the player with the ball is considered to have been given adequate time to execute a decision. The player with the ball must decide either to continue on his path and gamble on whether he could reach the spot first before the defender, or whether he should brake or change direction to avoid contact.

*(continued ...)*

*The PATH Theory of Contact - Some General Principles (continued ... )*

## 2. GUARDING A PLAYER WHO DOES NOT CONTROL THE BALL

### (a) Moving Defender:

To establish a legal guarding position against an opponent who does not have the ball, a moving player must *'get there first'*. In other words, if two opponents, neither of whom has the ball, are pushing in a race to reach a desired position on the court, whoever reaches the position first is entitled to that position. (Reference: *IWBF Rulebook – Article 33.5*)

### (b) Stationary Defender Who Moves Into The Braking Area Of A Moving Opponent:

A defender who is initially stationary less than a chair length from the braking area of a moving opponent who does not have the ball, and who then moves into the braking area of that opponent must allow the opponent time to avoid contact. (Reference: *IWBF Rulebook – Article 33.5*)

## 3. SCREENING

As in FIBA basketball, a player who sets a screen in IWBF basketball must be stationary.

To set a legal screen, the screener must *either*:

(a) *Cover the path* of the opponent being screened

Or

(b) Allow the opponent time and distance to avoid contact.

## 4. ANTICIPATING THE DEFENCE

### The Player Who Has The Ball Must Always Expect To Be Guarded

In IWBF basketball, **the player with the ball** is expected to anticipate that he will always be guarded. (Reference: *IWBF Rulebook – Article 33.4.2*)

**The player with the ball** must be ready at all times to avoid legal defence. This is the same as what is expected of the ball carrier in FIBA basketball.

**This is the most important underlying principle that determines the responsibility for contact involving the player who has the ball.**

In IWBF basketball, if a defender has established a legal position, whether on or off the ball, then the opponent is considered to have had time to make a decision about whether he should have continued to move and gamble on whether he could have reached the spot first, or whether he needed to avoid the contact.

This is the same as in FIBA basketball.

A moving offensive player in IWBF wheelchair basketball may find that his defender has occupied a legal position very quickly, leaving the offensive player little time to avoid contact. (The same can occur to the offensive player in FIBA basketball.) The same can also be true of a defensive player who encounters a screen. All players are expected to maintain control of their chairs at all times, with or without the ball, so that they can avoid opponents who have established a legal position. Failure to see an opponent or failure to avoid an opponent who has taken a legal position very quickly is no excuse for contact.

**In particular, the player who has the ball must be aware that he puts at risk his ability to stop or change direction whenever he takes his hands off the wheels to pass or shoot.**

*(continued .. )*

The PATH Theory of Contact - Some General Principles (continued ... )

## 5. WHO GOT THERE FIRST?

### Some Examples

In FIBA basketball, the defender who reaches a legal position in front of an opponent who has the ball is usually required to be facing that opponent. That is not the case in IWBF basketball. The wheelchair defender only has to legally occupy a position first. Which direction he is facing is not relevant.

Deciding *Who got there first?* in IWBF basketball has been made a relatively simple decision because the principles involved in the PATH theory of contact are so simple.

Let's look at two examples where both players are moving.

#### Example 1

A defender RED 4 attempts to wheel in front of a moving opponent BLUE 7 who has the ball and is trying to reach the same position first. If contact occurs as both moving players try to enter and occupy the same position on court, the official must judge whether the defender RED 4 has *covered the path* of the opponent BLUE 7, or whether RED 4 has allowed BLUE 7 time and distance to avoid contact.

- If RED 4 has *covered the path* of BLUE 7, then RED 4 is legal, and BLUE 7 will be responsible for contact.
- If RED 4 did not *cover the path* of BLUE 7 but did allow BLUE 7 time and distance to avoid contact, then BLUE 7 will be responsible for contact that occurs.
- If RED 4 did not *cover the path*, and did not allow BLUE 7 time to avoid contact, then RED 4 is responsible for the contact.

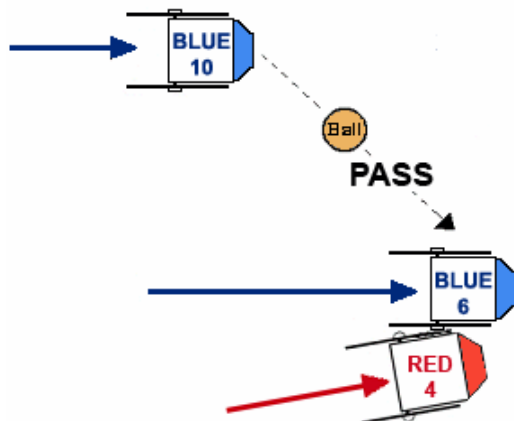
Remember, however, that RED 4 does not have the right, once having *covered the path*, to continue to move towards Blue 7 and collide head on with him. Red 4 can maintain his position in front of Blue 7 by moving across the path, or by moving away from the opponent while still in his path (as in FIBA). If RED 4 has covered the path of BLUE 7, but then moves out the other side of the path with only the back of his chair still in the path, BLUE 7 cannot continue and contact the rear of RED 4's chair. RED 4 occupied and then continued to occupy the section of floor on which Blue 7 collided with him. RED 4 is legal.

#### Example 2 (Figure N.1)

Red 4 and Blue 6, neither of whom has the ball, are both pushing hard down the court on a fast break. They are on converging paths. A third player, Blue 10, has the ball. Blue 6 pushes into the restricted area to look for a pass. Blue 10 attempts to pass to Blue 6. As Blue 6 enters the restricted area, looking for a pass, Red 4 crashes into the side of Blue 6 just before Blue 6 catches the pass.

Who is responsible for this contact?

Figure N.1



Blue 10 is passing the ball to Blue 6.  
Red 4 pushes into the side of Blue 6

**Decision:** Pushing foul by Red 4  
(Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.5)

(continued .. )



# TIME AND DISTANCE

There is a correlation between IWBF and FIBA concepts of TIME and DISTANCE.

- FIBA allows a player one or two **steps** to stop, depending upon how fast the player is moving.
- IWBF allows a player one or two **chair lengths** to stop, depending upon how fast the player is moving.

## GUARDING THE BALL CARRIER

In IWBF basketball, the TIME and DISTANCE element becomes a judgement call by the official when a defender stops *in the path* of the ball carrier without having *covered the path* of the ball carrier. In this situation, it is up to the official to determine whether the defender has given the ball carrier sufficient time and distance to stop or avoid contact. The general guide is to allow the ball carrier a maximum of one or two chair lengths avoid contact, depending upon the speed of the chair. If the ball carrier is travelling relatively slowly, approximately one chair length is enough. If he is travelling relatively quickly, no more than two chair lengths should be needed.

Tests conducted in Australia in 1999 by Ross Dewell indicate that one or two chair lengths is *more* than enough distance for a fast moving player to change direction in order to avoid a stationary opponent.

When a player has *covered the path* of an opponent, the decision about time and distance is **already made** for the official. If the path of the ball carrier is covered, then the defender's position is legal, and the ball carrier must avoid contact.

**If the path was not covered, then, and only then, does the official need to consider whether the defender has allowed the ball carrier time and distance to avoid contact.**

## COVERING THE PATH

To *cover the path* of your opponent means to take a position in the path of an opponent so that your wheelchair stretches across from one side of the path of the opponent to the other side of the path.

A player's path is defined as being bounded by the parallels drawn from either side of a player's seat, in the direction that the player is moving.

## SUMMARY: MOVING OPPONENTS – TIME AND DISTANCE

### 1. Guarding The Ball Carrier and Screening

IWBF imposes the following requirements on a defender who moves into the path of a moving opponent who has the ball, or a screener who sets a screen on a moving opponent.

- He must either *cover the path* of the opponent (i.e. the ball carrier or the opponent being screened),  
... Or...
- If he does **not cover the path**, he needs to have allowed the opponent TIME and DISTANCE to avoid contact by stopping inside the path but **beyond the braking distance** of the opponent.

If he does either of these things, this defender or screener is considered to have established a legal position, and the opponent will be responsible for any resulting contact.

### 2. Moving Defender v Opponent Who Does Not Have The Ball

To have established a position in the path of a moving opponent who does **not** have the ball, a moving player must occupy that floor position before the opponent does. In other words, he must *get there first*. There is no time or distance requirement. In IWBF basketball, the player taking this position can be facing in any direction.

### 3. Stationary Defender v Moving Opponent Who May or May Not Have The Ball

If a **stationary** defender moves at the last moment **from within a chair length** into the braking area of a moving opponent **who may or may not have the ball**, he must allow that opponent time to avoid contact. In other words, he must *cover the path* of that opponent.

**NOTE: This is the only situation where a player must allow time and distance to avoid contact to an opponent who does NOT have the ball.**

(continued ...)

*The PATH Theory of Contact - Some General Principles (continued ... )*

## TIME AND DISTANCE

### 1. EQUAL TIME FOR THE OFFENCE AND THE DEFENCE

PATH THEORY has made it easy for a referee to judge who is responsible for contact **that involves a player who has the ball** when compared to previous IWBF contact theory.

If a defender has had time to *cover the path* of an opponent who has the ball, then the ball carrier is considered to have had equal time to avoid contact, i.e. he has had equal time to have made and acted on a decision about whether his opponent was going to beat him to the position.

In other words, the time that the ball carrier has had to make and execute a decision about whether he needs to avoid contact is the same as his defender has had to reach position. **Equal time for both players.** This is expressed in the following concepts:

*"If the defence had time to get there, the offence had equal time to avoid contact"*  
or, conversely, .....

*"If the offence had time to get there, the defence had equal time to avoid contact"*

This is the same concept as the FIBA principle for **Guarding the player who controls the ball.**

In wheelchair basketball, if the defence has *covered the path* of the **ball carrier**, then the defence is legal. Responsibility for contact is now an easy decision. The ball carrier must avoid contact with the legal defender.

**When guarding a player who does not have the ball**, the defensive player has established a legal position if he *gets there first* if both players are on converging paths. There is no time and distance requirement. However, there ARE time and distance requirements if the defender is stationary and then suddenly moves from within a chair length into the braking area of a moving opponent. He must allow the opponent time and distance to avoid contact.

**In a screening situation**, the screener must either *cover the path* of his opponent, or allow the opponent time and distance to avoid contact.

A player who pushes into the path of a ball carrier at right angles to that player, and legally covers the path, is not required to stop to maintain his position. The defender maintains his legal position if he continues to roll across the ball carrier's path if the ball carrier has not changed direction. In fact, if the defender has *covered the path*, the same applies if he continues to roll across the path at any angle that will avoid a head on collision with the ball carrier. He is not entitled to roll directly towards the ball carrier and collide head on with him. If the ball carrier changes direction and takes a path that would avoid contact with the defender, then the defender must establish a new legal position in the ball carrier's new path.

### 2. THE TIME NEEDED TO AVOID CONTACT: IWBF V FIBA

The speed needed either to reach a legal position or to avoid contact is relative when comparing IWBF wheelchair players to FIBA able-bodied players. The FIBA player can take a position much more quickly or unexpectedly than an IWBF player. A FIBA defender at the last instant may legally jump into a position to legally establish that position in front of the opposing ball carrier, leaving the ball carrier no option but to charge.

Compared to FIBA basketball, the IWBF player is usually *within the visual field* of his opponent for far longer than his FIBA counterpart when he commences a move into the path of an opponent. It takes longer for a wheelchair player to push his wheelchair into position compared to a running FIBA player. The IWBF player cannot make a sudden move into legal position the way a FIBA player can. Logically, then, a wheelchair player in general may get more warning – a longer look – at an opponent who is attempting to establish a position in his path than does a FIBA player in the same situation.

The following concept is equally true for IWBF players as for FIBA players – that is, if the defence had time to *get there* (establish a legal position), the offence had equal time to avoid contact. The actual TIME available may be longer in wheelchair basketball, even when the distance is the same, because a wheelchair player does not move as quickly as an able-bodied player does. The wheelchair player takes longer to cover the same distance, so the opponents get a longer time to see what is happening.

*(continued ... )*

*The PATH Theory of Contact - Some General Principles (continued ... )*

### 3. TIME AND DISTANCE - COMPARING IWBF AND FIBA

If you compare the approximate top speed of a running able-bodied athlete to the approximate top speed of a wheelchair athlete, it is possible to generalise that the able-bodied athlete can cover distance at approximately twice the speed of a wheelchair player. But players in FIBA and players in IWBF are allowed about the same suggested distance to stop to avoid contact (one or two steps v one or two chair lengths).

So in theory a wheelchair player, in terms of time, has twice as long to stop as does his FIBA counterpart. Counteracting this, the wheelchair player with the ball may have to control the ball by placing it on his lap before braking. So although he may have twice as much to do, he may have twice the time to do it in.

However, the IWBF player can **anticipate the play** with the same degree of awareness as a FIBA player. So, in theory at least, the FIBA player frequently has less time than a wheelchair player to make crucial decisions about the time and distance available to him to avoid contact. This is because things happen more quickly in the able-bodied game. Logically, then, the IWBF player has more time available to him than does his FIBA counterpart to make the same crucial decisions about whether he has time to avoid contact. He will be responsible for the consequences of the decisions that he makes.

#### **Remember:**

***If Player B had time to establish a legal position  
in the path of opponent Player A,  
then that opponent Player A had an equal chance  
to avoid contact.***

*Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.4.1*

**This is the most important basic principle  
of the wheelchair basketball contact rules**

# GUARDING SITUATIONS

## The Responsibilities Of The Player With The Ball And The Responsibilities Of The Defender

The IWBF's rulebook *Official Wheelchair Basketball Rules* establishes clear rights and responsibilities for the player who has the ball. It establishes clear guidelines about what the ball carrier should expect from the defence. It also gives clear guidelines about what the defence is entitled to do when attempting to establish a legal defence position in relation to the ball carrier.

### THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PLAYER WITH THE BALL

The player with the ball has clear rights and responsibilities.

- He has the right to a position on the floor *if he can get there first*.
- He has the responsibility for contact if the opponent got there first. The opponent is considered to have established a legal position first if he has allowed the player with the *ball time and distance to avoid contact*, or if he has *covered the path* of the player with the ball.

### THE BALL CARRIER HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO ANTICIPATE THE DEFENCE AND TO AVOID CONTACT

- The player with the ball, as in FIBA, must expect that he will be guarded. He must be prepared to avoid contact with a legally positioned opponent by stopping or changing direction. This is stated clearly in the rulebook (*Reference: IWBF Rulebook – Article 33.4.2*). **This is a most important responsibility**. He is expected to *be prepared* to take avoiding action at very short notice. The same expectation applies to a player in FIBA basketball. In fact, because of the slower movement of IWBF wheelchair basketball players in comparison to FIBA running players, wheelchair players have more time to avoid contact than the FIBA player, even though players in both IWBF and FIBA have the *same* degree of *awareness* of defence players moving into their path.
- A wheelchair player who has the basketball may not be able to stop as quickly as the running FIBA player because wheelchair basketball players cannot simultaneously use their hands to brake their wheels and also control the ball. The running player can stop and control the ball independently. Nevertheless, it is the wheelchair basketball player's responsibility to be aware that, despite the difficulty, he may have to stop suddenly to avoid legal defence.
- The player with the ball does *not* have the right to force his way into any position legally occupied by an opponent. If a defender establishes a legal position in the path of the player with the ball, then that ball carrier is responsible for avoiding contact.

### THE BALL CARRIER MUST MAKE A DECISION

Because the ball carrier has the responsibility for avoiding contact with any defender who establishes a legal position in his path, the ball carrier has to be *alert to the need* to make a decision about this when necessary. This is *exactly* the same decision that a FIBA ball carrier in the same situation has to make. If he sees that a defender is attempting to reach a position in his path, the ball carrier must decide whether he can beat the defender to the spot. He may gamble on getting there first. It is a gamble that he may win. **But it is also a gamble that he may lose**. It may be a decision that he has only a brief moment to make. But he is responsible for the results of his decision if he gambles and loses. If the defender beats him to the spot (gets there first) and establishes a legal position by *covering-the-path* of the ball carrier, then the ball carrier is responsible for any contact that results.

(continued ... )



*Guarding Situations (continued ...)*

It takes time for a defender to wheel *into* the path and then *cover-the-path* of the ball carrier. It is the responsibility of the ball carrier to be aware of the possible movement of a defender into his path. This awareness is one of the skills of the game. This awareness by the ball carrier will influence his decision about whether to take action to avoid the possibility of being called for a charging foul if the defender *gets there* first and establishes a legal position in the path of the ball carrier.

## THE DEFENDER ALSO HAS RESPONSIBILITIES

The defender has a similar responsibility to that of the ball carrier. He has a similar decision to make. He must gamble on whether he can *get there first* by *covering-the-path* of the ball carrier, or whether he must avoid contact and allow the ball carrier to take the position. Like the ball carrier, the defender may have only a brief moment to make this decision, and he will be responsible for the results if he makes a poor decision.

## LEGAL DEFENCE POSITION

To establish a legal defensive position **in the path of the ball carrier**, the defender must **either**:

- (a) *Cover-the-path* of the ball carrier
- Or
- (b) Allow the ball carrier time and distance to avoid contact.

If the defender has fulfilled *either* of the above criteria, then the ball carrier is responsible for avoiding contact.

### NOTE:

**Criteria (a)** is relevant where the defender and the ball carrier are both moving in an attempt to reach the same position on the court. Whoever reaches that spot first is entitled to that floor position.

The defender must fulfil **Criteria (a)** to have established a legal position.

The ball carrier however only needs to reach a position first.

**Criteria (b)** is relevant where a defender has established a legal position in the path of the ball carrier, without having covered the path of the opposing ball carrier.

For example, defender Red 4 is stationary in a position about 10 metres down court in the path of the ball carrier Blue 12. Red 4 does not have the path of Blue 12 covered, but clearly Blue 12 has been given time to avoid contact. Red 4 is entitled to this legal position on the court. The ball carrier, Blue 12, has the prime responsibility to avoid contact.

## HOW MUCH ROOM DOES THE BALL CARRIER NEED TO AVOID CONTACT?

If a defender stops in the path of the ball carrier without having *covered the path* of that player, the defender must leave distance for the ball carrier to have time to stop or change direction to avoid contact. The amount of distance required depends entirely upon the speed of the ball carrier. A wheelchair moving slowly needs less room to stop or change direction than a wheelchair that is moving quickly. A suggested distance is about a chair-length (approximately one metre) for a player moving slowly, and about two chair-lengths (approximately two metres) for a player moving more quickly. This becomes a judgement call by the official.

The referee does *not* have to judge whether the ball carrier has exercised sufficient awareness of the impending presence of a defender in his path. This awareness of the possibility of being guarded is the responsibility of the ball carrier. In fact, the official should take that awareness for granted, and judge *only* whether the ball carrier was given room to avoid contact by stopping or braking or changing direction.

### NOTE:

*In the situation described above, even though the path was not covered, a legal position was established by allowing the player with the ball enough time to avoid contact.*

*PATH theory states that once a defender has **covered the path** of the player with the ball, then the defender has established a legal position, and the player with the ball is responsible for any contact that results. Because the path has been covered, the official has had the **time and distance** judgement made **for him**.*

## LEGAL DEFENCE - IS THERE A NEED TO STOP?

Does a player who has *covered-the-path* of an opponent who has the ball have to remain stationary in order to remain in a legal position?

The answer is usually **NO** as long as when he moves he **maintains his legal position in the path of the opponent**.

However, there is one occasion when he *must* be stationary. That occasion is when he is moving *head-on* at the opponent who has the ball with the intention of obtaining a legal *defensive* position. He must stop before contact occurs. He will be responsible for contact if he pushes head-on into an opponent who has the ball.

Let's look at some examples.

### Question 1. (Figure Q.1)

If defender RED 4 moves across the path of opponent BLUE 8 who has the ball, and *covers the path* of BLUE 8, can RED 4 continue to be moving at the instant of contact, and still be in a legal position?

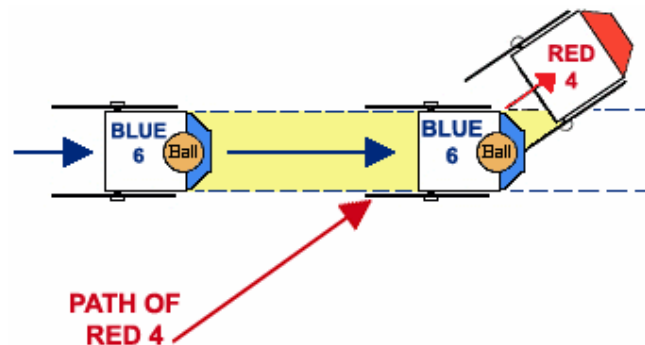
#### Answer 1:

The answer is YES, under the following circumstances, which are very common.

If RED 4 moves across the path of BLUE 8 and after *covering-the-path*, he continues out the other side of the path of BLUE 8, RED 4 **continues to retain the legal position of that part of the floor still occupied by his wheelchair**, including that part which is still in the path of BLUE 8.

If BLUE 8 does not change direction and continues on his straight-line path and crashes into the rear side of RED 4's chair, **BLUE 8 is responsible for that contact**.

Figure Q.1 Charging Foul by Blue 5



### Question 2.

RED 4 moves across the path of opponent BLUE 8 who has the ball, and *covers the path* of BLUE 8. BLUE 8 becomes aware that he is in danger of contacting RED 4. BLUE 8 changes direction and begins a **new path**. This new path is in the same direction that RED 4 is heading as RED 4 leaves the path of BLUE 8. BLUE 8's new path will avoid the section of his old path that RED 4 legally had covered. What must RED 4 do to re-establish a legal position?

#### Answer 2:

BLUE 8 is entitled to continue on his new path.

RED 4 must now establish a new legal position by either:

- (i) Covering the new path of BLUE 8, or
- (ii) By establishing in the path of BLUE 8 a new position that allows BLUE 8 time and distance to avoid contact.

### Question 3.

What responsibility does the **ball carrier** have if he sees an opponent wheeling across his path or directly towards him front on?

#### Answer 3:

The ball carrier must make a decision about whether the defender is likely to establish a legal position in his path. He must decide whether he should continue on his path in the hope that he will beat the defender to the position that the defender is trying to establish, or whether he should avoid contact with the **potentially** legally positioned defender by either stopping or changing direction.

The ball carrier **always** has the responsibility to be aware that he is **always** likely to be guarded, and that he **always** must be prepared to avoid contact with legal defence.

(continued ...)

*The Need To Stop (continued ... )*

#### **Question 4.**

What responsibility does a **defender** have who wheels *head-on* directly at an opponent who has the ball in an attempt to establish a legal position in the opponent's path?

#### **Answer 4:**

The defender cannot cause contact by wheeling head-on into the opponent who has the ball. He must establish a legal position either by:

(a) *Covering the path* of the ball carrier, and then he must stop, because he is moving directly at the defender head on, or .....

(b) Establishing a position by stopping in the path of the ball carrier (but not necessarily *covering the path*) and allowing the ball carrier time and distance to avoid contact by stopping or changing direction.

The distance required to stop or change direction is approximately one or two metres, depending upon the speed of the wheelchair.

#### **Question 5.**

How do the rules for an offensive player who attempts to set a *screen* differ to those for the defender in the previous questions?

#### **Answer 5:**

The screener must be stationary.

The screener must *cover the path*, or allow time and distance to avoid contact.

#### **Notes:**

1. If **Player B** sets a screen *inside the braking distance* of opponent player A, **Player B** must keep his screen **stationary**. If **Player B** moves that screen and significantly alters his position in relation to Player A, then **Player B** may be responsible for any contact that results.

The first requirement of the screener in both IWBF and FIBA rules is that the screener must remain stationary. (Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.8)

2. The player **being screened** must avoid contact with an opponent who has established a legal screen.

# AWARENESS AND CONTACT

## The Responsibilities of The Player Who Has The Ball

In IWBF basketball, **the player with the ball** must always expect to be guarded. This is stated clearly in the **IWBF** basketball rules (*Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.4.2*).

This also is stated clearly in **FIBA** basketball rules (*Reference: FIBA Rulebook - Article 33.4.2*).

In the **IWBF** Rulebook, *Article 33.4.2* states: The player with the ball must expect to be guarded and must be prepared to stop or change direction whenever an opponent takes a legal guarding position in front of him.



**Sandy Blythe** 2.5 player – Ready to pass but in control of his chair – left hand ready to stop or change direction to avoid contact.

Photo: Courtesy of *Basketball News*  
January 1999  
Used with permission of the editor

Thus, the player in possession **must be aware of his responsibility** to avoid contact with a defender who establishes a legal position in his path. The wheelchair player in possession of the ball is expected to **maintain control of his chair** in order to be able to avoid contact with legal defence.

In FIBA basketball, a defender who establishes a legal position by moving suddenly into the path of the ball carrier does not have to allow the ball carrier time or distance to stop, other than allowing the ball carrier room to land if he was in the air when the defender established his position. **The FIBA rules require that the ball carrier needs to be aware of the possible need to stop or change direction**, and that he must be prepared to do this if need be. The implication of the rule is that if the defender had time to establish a legal position, then the ball carrier has had an equal opportunity to stop. These philosophies also are firmly established in the IWBF basketball rules.

Often, the ball carrier in both FIBA and IWBF basketball is moving so quickly that it is impossible for him to stop or change direction to avoid legal defence. In these cases, he will be responsible for the contact when he charges into the defender. FIBA and IWBF rules would consider that the ball carrier has ignored his responsibility to maintain the control necessary to avoid contact.

In these block/charge situations, the wheelchair player who has the ball has a number of advantages over the FIBA ball carrier. In IWBF basketball, defenders cannot move suddenly and unexpectedly into the path of the ball carrier by moving suddenly from *outside* the ball carrier's field of vision as they can in FIBA basketball. The nature of the

movement of the wheelchair means that a defender will come into the ball carrier's field of vision well before the defender can *cover-the-path* of the ball carrier. The wheelchair ball carrier has plenty of warning that a danger situation is developing for him. He has time to see that a defender is attempting to establish a legal position in his path. He must **anticipate** the possible need to stop or change direction quickly.

This is where **AWARENESS** comes in. The ball carrier must be **aware** that a defender is approaching. He must be **aware** of the possible need to avoid contact if a defender successfully covers the ball carrier's path. So the ball carrier must make a decision. Either he can gamble on beating the defender to the disputed position on the floor, or he can change direction or stop to avoid contact. He will be responsible for the consequences of the decision that he makes. He may have only a moment to make and carry out such a decision.

When you take into account the fact that a FIBA player can move at approximately *double* the speed of the fastest wheelchair player, it can be seen clearly that the wheelchair ball carrier in fact may have *more* time to anticipate the need to make such a decision about avoiding contact than does his FIBA counterpart. (The wheelchair 100 metre sprint record is approximately double that of the able-bodied world record).

It is interesting to note that it is not only *the player with the ball* who has to make a decision about whether he needs to avoid contact. The *defender* has a similar decision to make. He can gamble on beating the ball carrier to the disputed position on the floor, or he can change direction or stop to avoid contact because he has judged that he will not reach the position before the ball carrier. Like the player with the ball, the defender also will be responsible for consequences of the decision that he makes.

(continued ...)



*Awareness and Contact (continued ... )*

It is most important to note the following fact.

Chair control is usually obtained by using one or both hands on the big wheels. A ball carrier who takes **both** of his hands off the wheels and holds the ball above his head ready to shoot or pass has relinquished and chosen to ignore his responsibility to maintain control of his chair at all times. It is a risk that he takes. He will be responsible for any contact caused if his chair contacts the chair of any opponent who has a legal position.

## **Conclusions – Responsibilities of the player who has the ball**

The following five points are the important responsibilities of the player who has possession of the ball.

1. The ball carrier must be **aware** that he is always likely to be guarded.
2. The ball carrier must be **aware** of his responsibility to avoid legal defence.
3. The ball carrier must be **aware** of his constant responsibility **always to maintain control of his chair** so that he can avoid legal defence.
4. The ball carrier **always** must **anticipate** the possible need to stop or change direction quickly to avoid legal defence.
5. The ball carrier is **considered to have been given adequate time** to stop or change direction to avoid contact if an opponent has established a legal position in his path.

### **Remember:**

***If Player B had time to establish a legal position  
in the path of opponent Player A,  
then that opponent Player A had an equal chance to avoid contact.***

*Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.4.1*

## WHEN IS THERE **NO** DIFFERENCE IN THE RULES FOR ON-BALL AND OFF-BALL CONTACT?

There **are** situations where the rules are the same for the three main categories of contact.

The three basic contact situations are:

1. *Guarding The Player With The Ball*
2. *Guarding A Player Who Does Not Have The Ball.*
3. *Screening*

The IWBF rules governing the responsibility for contact are the same **only** when the player being screened or guarded is **stationary**.

In these stationary situations, the Screener or the Defender can position himself as close as possible short of contact to the *stationary* opponent.

So, in these *stationary opponent* situations only, IWBF makes **no distinction** between ON BALL and OFF BALL responsibilities for contact.

However, when the player being screened is moving, there *are* differences between these three types of situations. Also, *Guarding The Player With The Ball* has different criteria for responsibility for contact. In general, the responsibilities are:

### **1. GUARDING THE PLAYER WHO CONTROLS THE BALL**

The defender must either ..

- (a) Cover the path, or
- (b) Allow Time/Distance to avoid contact

### **2. GUARDING AN OPPONENT WHO DOES NOT CONTROL THE BALL**

*If the opponent is moving*, the official must decide 'Who got there first?' The defender must obey the rules for *Crossing The Path*, and the rule about the Stationary Defender who moves into the braking area of a moving opponent (this defender must allow the opponent *time to avoid contact*).

### **3. SCREENING**

The screener must allow a moving defender time and distance to avoid contact.

The Screener must be stationary, otherwise this is not a Screening situation.

The screen can be set as close as possible to a stationary opponent.

## FURTHER EXAMPLES OF RULES DIFFERENCES – HEAD-ON COLLISIONS

Here are two common situations that clearly demonstrate the different rules for ON BALL and OFF BALL contact.

### **Situation 1:**

Two opponents are pushing towards each other head-on in an effort to reach a loose ball. Both players collide head on in their effort to reach the ball. Neither player has the ball when the collision occurs

This may be a no call, with neither player doing anything illegal.

However, let's look at the same situation and this time, one of these players has the ball.

### **Situation 2:**

Contact between the **SAME** two players travelling on the **SAME** paths (from opposing directions) with the **SAME** contact would result in a foul being called if one player was a defender pushing head-on straight at the opponent who has the ball. This would be a foul on the defender.

## CONCLUSION

There **ARE** differences in the rules for **ON BALL** and **OFF BALL** contact  
(Reference: Compare IWBF Rulebook Articles 33.5.1 and 33.4.3)

# THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN *IWBF* CONTACT RULES AND *FIBA* CONTACT RULES

There are many areas where the IWBF and FIBA contact principles are similar, and other areas where there are important differences.

In addition, IWBF has some wheelchair specific contact principles, such as *crossing the path*.

This article will look only at the three common categories of contact situations described below.

Both IWBF and FIBA divide contact into three basic situations. These are:

1. Guarding the player who controls the ball
2. Guarding a player who does not control the ball
3. Screening

The rules in each situation differ. Let's look at each of these three situations.

## 1. GUARDING THE PLAYER WHO CONTROLS THE BALL

*This deals with contact on the ball.*

Moving Ball Carrier	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>IWBF</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Cover the path, or</i></li> <li>• <i>Allow time/distance to avoid contact</i></li> <li>• <i>Face any direction</i></li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FIBA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Get there first</i></li> <li>• <i>No time/distance requirement</i></li> <li>• <i>Face the ball carrier</i></li> </ul>
Stationary Ball Carrier	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>IWBF</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>As close as possible short of contact</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FIBA</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>As close as possible short of contact</i></p>

*(continued ...)*

Differences between IWBF and FIBA Contact Rules (continued ...)

## 2. GUARDING A PLAYER WHO DOES NOT CONTROL THE BALL

This deals with contact **off the ball**

Stationary Opponent	<p>IWBF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• As close as possible short of contact</li></ul>	<p>FIBA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allow time and distance to avoid contact</li></ul>
Moving Opponent	<p>IWBF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Get there first, but ...</li><li>• Obey rules for <i>Crossing the Path</i> and ...</li><li>• Obey rules for Moving into the braking area from within a chair length from a stationary Position (Wheelchair tripping)</li></ul>	<p>FIBA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allow time and distance to avoid contact</li></ul>

(continued)



*Differences between IWBF and FIBA Contact Rules (continued ...)*

### 3. SCREENING

- Screening is an action by an **offensive** player.
- Screening rules deal with contact **off** the ball – i.e., an offensive player setting a screen on a defensive opponent.

<p>Moving Opponent</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>IWBF</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screener must remain stationary</li> <li>• Allow time / distance to avoid contact</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FIBA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screener must remain stationary</li> <li>• Allow time / distance to avoid contact</li> </ul>
<p>Stationary Opponent</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>IWBF</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screener must remain stationary</li> <li>• As close as possible short of contact both inside and outside field of vision</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FIBA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screener must remain stationary</li> <li>• As close as possible short of contact if <u>within</u> visual field</li> <li>• Allow distance to avoid contact if <u>outside</u> visual field</li> </ul>

# DISABILITY AND CLASSIFICATION POINTS

*Note: Thank you to IWBF Chief Classifier Don Perriman for his assistance with editing this article.*

## CLASSIFICATION

Wheelchair players are **classified** according to their level of disability. Fracture, amputation or some other type of limb dysfunction such as polio may have caused the disability.

Players are **classified** according to their degree of balance and movement. The disability of a wheelchair basketball player affects his playing ability by affecting his balance and his range of movement. Officials **must** have a general understanding of the nature of player disability and the way this affects a player's BALANCE in order to be able to judge advantage and disadvantage when contact occurs.

There are four basic classification groups: 1, 2, 3 and 4. A player is classified in one of those groups, according to his level of disability and limb function. There are situations where a player does not fit into an exact category for classification. In these cases the Classifiers may assign a player an extra half point above a certain class. This creates players with 1.5, 2.5, 3.5 or 4.5 points assigned to them. Players with the highest degree of disability are classified 1.0. Those with the lowest degree of disability are classified 4.5.

Each team is permitted a MAXIMUM of 14.0 points on court

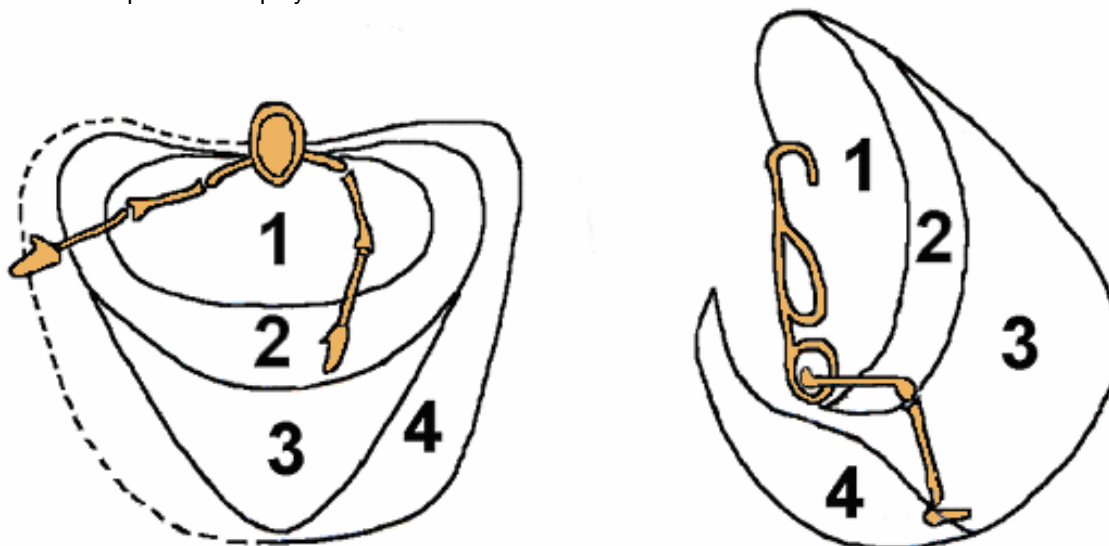
## SPINAL FRACTURES and USE OF ABDOMINAL MUSCLES

A player who has suffered a spinal fracture of vertebrae generally loses either total or partial use of the muscles below that fracture. He will lose the use of his legs and possibly his abdominal muscles, depending on the location and the severity of the spinal damage.

The following diagram (*Figure U.1*) illustrates the range of movement for player classifications 1, 2, 3 and 4. This diagram is a general guide only to classification.

*Figure U.1*

This diagram represents the range of movement of a ball held in two hands by player. The numbers represent the player classification.



*Diagram used with permission from IWBF.*

(continued ...)

*Disability and Classification Points (continued ... )*

## LOW POINT PLAYERS (1.0 to 2.5)

### 1. A fracture around the level of the shoulder blades.

A spinal fracture around the level of the shoulder blades – near or above the level of the lowest ribs – means that the player will not have the use of his abdominal muscles. Loss of muscle function and balance has a number of effects upon a low point player.

**1-point players:** Have no lower limb movement, and little or no controlled trunk movement. Their balance in both the forward and sideways directions is significantly impaired, and they rely on their arms to return to the upright position when unbalanced. These players have no stability in a **contact situation and usually rebound overhead** single-handed.

**2-point players:** Usually have no lower limb movement, but have some partially controlled trunk movement in the forward direction. They do not have controlled sideways movement or trunk rotation. Players have limited stability in a contact situation, often relying on their handgrip to remain upright in a collision.

*Note: Often, 2.5 classification players are referred to as mid-range players.*

### HOW DOES THIS DISABILITY AFFECT THE PLAY OF A LOW POINT PLAYER?

A spinal fracture around the level of the shoulder blades disables a player's abdominal muscles. This affects the player's ability to lean wide or forward of his chair and reach with two hands for the ball without over-balancing. He must hold his chair with one hand, and lean to reach for the ball with the other hand. He must pull or push himself back upright at the completion of the catch. The low point player is usually slower around the court than a high or middle point player.

*If the player shoots, passes or leans forwards or sideways, he will usually have trouble staying balanced or upright after he releases the ball or as he reaches for the ball. He may flop forward with his chest resting on his knees.*

#### • REFEREE JUDGEMENT- LOW POINT PLAYERS

*A low point player whose chair is contacted while reaching or leaning may be disadvantaged because the contact may cause him to lose his balance.*



This photo is a good example of the differences between a high point classification player and a low point classification player.

*Photo: Courtesy of Wheelchair Basketball Canada and Kevin Bogetti-Smith Photography. Used with permission.*

BLACK 11 on the left is a **low** point player. His seat is angled back steeply, tilting down to the backrest of his chair. He sits wedged back into his seat and is strapped securely into the seat. His knees are up higher than his waist. All of this aids his stability in his chair. But this also restricts his height.

In contrast, BLACK 8 is a **high** point player. He is sitting high in his chair. His seat is not angled. It is approximately parallel to the floor. His chair has larger diameter wheels and so his chair is clearly much higher off the floor compared to BLACK 11's chair.

In comparison to the chair setup of low pointer BLACK 11, the seat of BLACK 8 is well above his axles, close to the top of his wheel rims. He can sit up higher and straighter in his chair because he has better balance than his lower point opponent. He can lean backwards and sideways. He can tip and twist and turn his chair because of his torso function and his ability to balance himself without having to hold onto his chair. A low point player cannot achieve these things.

The back low end of BLACK 11's chair seat is a lot lower to the floor - close to the height of his axles. This helps him to be more stable and more securely balanced, but this also means that by sitting low in his chair he cannot achieve the height of the high point player.

*(continued ...)*

*Disability and Classification Points (continued ... )*

## 2. MID-RANGE POINT PLAYERS (3.0 to 3.5)

Mid-Range points players will have a wider range and degree of movement and balance than low point players. (Note: 2.5 classification players are often generally referred to in discussion as mid-range players).

**3 point players:** May have some lower limb movement, and have controlled trunk movement forwards to the floor and up again, and have some rotation control. Mid point players do not have good sideways trunk control, but are more stable in a contact situation. They are able to rebound overhead with two hands comfortably.

### HOW DOES DEGREE OF DISABILITY AFFECT THE PLAY OF A MID-RANGE POINT PLAYER?

A 3.0 or 3.5-point player may be reasonably mobile, and also have less difficulty in reaching to rebound or catch a pass, and then recovering balance. The 3.5-point player may also be able to steer his fast-moving chair by swivelling his hips like a 4.0 or 4.5 player can.

#### • REFEREE JUDGEMENT- MID POINT PLAYERS

*The officials may be able to play advantage in some contact situations, such as passing, when similar contact on a low point player would result in a foul call. However, no player regardless of classification should be expected to play on through significant contact.*

## HIGH POINT PLAYERS (4.0 and 4.5)

High point players tend to have disabilities caused by a lower spine fracture, or full or partial leg amputation, or some other type of lower limb injury or disability such as polio.

*If a high point player has suffered a spinal injury, it will usually be around the lower spine.*

Any disabilities or injury to the lower spine or legs means that the player usually will have the use of his abdominal muscles. This means he will have better balance.

**4-point players** have normal trunk movement, but due to some reduced lower limb function are unable to lean sideways to both sides with *full* control. They are stable in contact and rebounding, with normal forward and rotation movements.



**4.5-point players** have the lowest levels of physical disability. They have either minimal lower limb dysfunction or they have leg amputation. They have normal trunk movements in all directions and are very stable when they lean away from their centre of gravity.

The photo shows White 12 (Patrick Anderson - Canada) who is a 4.5 high point player and a double amputee.

In this photo, White 12 is leaning over as he dribbles. He will be able to lean forward or sideways easily without needing to hold on to his wheels to maintain his balance. A high point player can do this but a one point player would struggle to lean like this without holding onto his chair to maintain balance.

A high point player can often steer and turn his chair simply by swivelling his hips, without touching his wheels with his hands. This better balance gives the high point player a huge advantage over a lower point player. His better balance will allow him to absorb small bumps and pushes that may disadvantage a low point player.

*Photo: Courtesy of Wheelchair Basketball Canada and Kevin Bogetti-Smith Photography. Used with permission.*

*(continued ...)*



*Disability and Classification Points (continued ... )***HOW DOES DEGREE OF DISABILITY AFFECT THE PLAY OF A HIGH POINT PLAYER?**

The superior balance of high point players gives them a number of advantages over mid- and low point players:

- High point players will find it far easier to reach wide or high or forwards to catch or pass the ball. They can lean and stretch and recover their upright position better than other players, subject to the classification comment above.
- They will be able to set their chairs up in such a way that they are sitting higher in their chair. This gives them a distinct advantage when rebounding.
- Because of their ability to lean and stretch, they will have a better array of shots than a lower point player.
- They will tend to be faster around the court than the low point players. This is because they can lean forward and drive the wheels hard with their hands and bodies, rather than just their arms.
- They can manoeuvre and turn their moving chairs by swivelling their hips, without touching their wheels with their hands. Because they can do this, they do not have to release their grip on the ball. This gives them a huge advantage over a low point player.

Because of superior balance, the high point player usually will have a chair that uses the maximum legal size limits. The chair will usually have the biggest wheels and the highest seat.

Because of these advantages, the 4.0 and 4.5 players tend to dominate the rebounding and the point scoring.

- **REFEREE JUDGEMENT- HIGH POINT PLAYERS - Advantage and Disadvantage**

*There is a danger that officials may allow more contact to be committed against the high point players because these players have better balance, and so they may appear to be less affected by the contact. Officials may be tempted to play this advantage in contact situations such as when a high point player successfully passes the ball, when a foul may have been called if similar contact had occurred on a low or mid range point player.*

*When two high point players are working against each other vigorously – for example, off the ball in a post position – the degree of contact that occurs may be greater than in a similar situation with two lower point players. Officials must determine the extent of the contact, and whether either player has gained an unfair advantage.*

*High point players should not be expected to play through significant contact. Contact that impedes movement, or creates a disadvantage must be penalised, regardless of the points classification of the players involved. Slight contact that does not affect play may be considered incidental with no foul being called. Contact to the arms of any shooter should be called, regardless of the shooter's points classification.*

*Contact between high and low point players can challenge the judgement of the official. Contact that may have been considered incidental between two high point players may be judged differently if a high point player causes similar contact against a low point player. Similarly, a low point player cannot persist in significantly bumping a high point opponent without penalty. Officials must judge each contact situation individually to determine advantage and disadvantage.*

*No player has the right to impede the movement of an opponent. Such contact is a foul and it should be called. In general, there is usually little advantage to be played where a player commits a HOLDING foul (against a stationary opponent) or a BLOCKING foul (against a moving opponent), regardless of either player's points classification.*

*Small bumps tend to be the type of contact where advantage may be able to be played if the bump was insignificant and did not affect play.*

*To be able to judge these situations consistently well, an official needs:*

- *Sound technical knowledge of PATH theory*
- *An excellent understanding of disability and balance*
- *Good floor position with unobstructed vision on the play.*
- *Good recognition of the action and intent of the players ( ie good reading of the play )*

## Experienced Referees Know More Than Just The Rules

Recently, I was asked how important it was for a referee to understand player disability and the points system. My reply was that I consider it is essential for a referee to have a good understanding of the functionality and classification of players. I believe that referees need that knowledge to be able to competently judge advantage/disadvantage when contact occurs.

Let me give you two simple examples where player classification points can influence what the official calls.

First, imagine a 4.5 point player taking a defensive rebound. As the 4.5 player rebounds, a 1.0 point player bumps the 4.5 player's chair. Having good balance, the 4.5 point player may be able to cope comfortably with the chair bump and give an outlet pass with no effect to his balance. In this example, the referee may allow this high point player to play on without a whistle because the chair bump had no effect on his ability to play the ball. The bump constituted incidental contact in the view of the official.

However, imagine the 1.0 point player taking the same rebound, and receiving the same bump to his chair. The severity of the bump, which had little effect on the superior balance of the 4.5 player, may affect significantly the ability of the 1.0 player to withstand the bump and give the same outlet pass. In this example, the referee may call a foul because the chair bump disadvantaged the 1.0 point player by affecting his balance and therefore restricting his ability to throw the outlet pass.



In this photo (*left*), White 8 (Joey Johnson - Canada) takes an offensive rebound against Australia. Johnson is a high point player – a 4.5.

In front of Johnson is an Australian 1.0 point player, Brendan Dowler (Green 14). Beside him is Australian 4.5 point player Justin Eveson (No.4 Green).

High pointer White 8 is maintaining his balance while reaching high for the ball and at the same time he is tipping and balancing his chair. Although tipping his chair sideways, he has remained within his cylinder. These are the actions of a high point player.

A **low** point player would struggle achieve such a physical feat. In fact, for a 1.0 point player, this play would be impossible. If a low-pointer's chair tipped like this on a rebound, the officials would need to look carefully for the cause of this.

An experienced official will instantly recognise the classification of the players in front of him.

*Photo: Courtesy of Wheelchair Basketball Canada and Kevin Bogetti-Smith Photography. Used with permission.*

The officials should recognise the setups of the chairs. Look at the relative heights of the chair setups of the chairs of the three players in the photo. There is a noticeable difference in the seat height between the low point player Green 14 and the two high point players – Green 4 and White 8. The seats of White 8 and Green 4 are horizontal to the floor. The seat of Green 14 is tipped back at a significant angle. Green 14 is wedged back into the angled seat in order to assist his balance and stability.

The officials must learn to recognise these chair setup details.

*(continued ..)*

*Experienced referees know more than just the rules (continued .. )*



Here is another excellent example of high point player Joey Johnson (Canada - White 8) tipping his chair to take a rebound. He has both hands off his wheels. He is tipping his chair to his left by shifting his body weight to the left as he stretches high with both hands to catch the ball to be able to reach higher to the ball. By tipping his chair like this legally, he is able to reach up much higher than he could if he rebounded with all four wheels on the floor.

White 8 can do this because of his superior balance and torso muscle function as a 4.5 player.

This is a spectacular play that a low point player cannot make.

The officials must be able to recognise the features of this play and the physical capabilities of the players involved.

In this situation, when judging any contact that occurs, the officials must learn to recognise a number of things:

1. Has the rebounder's chair tipped sideways because of the rebounder's strength and superior balance?

OR

2. Was his chair pushed by his opponent?

*Photo: Courtesy of Wheelchair Basketball Canada and Kevin Bogetti-Smith Photography. Used with permission.*

The officials must watch carefully to ensure that no opponent pushes under the uplifted wheels of the rebounder in this situation.

To judge this play, the officials must understand disability, balance and player classifications, as well as having excellent position and vision on the play. This knowledge is essential for wheelchair basketball referees.

### **Here are two more examples.**

1. Imagine a 4.5 point player driving towards a 1.0 point defender in the restricted area. He draws the defender to him, and then dishes off a pass to a team mate who takes the pass and scores. After throwing the pass, the 4.5 point player is unable to stop completely. He runs into an opponent who is a 1.0 point player. The contact appears only moderate. However, as a result of the contact, the 1.0 point player falls forward with his chest landing momentarily on his knees. The referee should call a foul on the 4.5 point player because the 1.0 point player was disadvantaged by the contact.

2. Imagine the 1.0 point player making the same play. He drives towards his 4.5 point opponent, draws this defender to him, and throws a pass to a team mate who scores. After throwing the pass, the 1.0 point player is unable to completely stop. He runs into the 4.5 point player with only moderate contact. Because the 4.5 point player has superior balance compared to the 1.0 point player, the 4.5 point player barely notices the contact. He turns without hindrance to pressure the shot being taken near him. In this case, the referee could judge that the 4.5 point player was not disadvantaged by the contact and allow play to continue.

In each of the above examples, the official's ability to recognise the degree of disability of the players will have a major influence on the nature of his call or his "no call". The reality is that the same type and degree of contact can affect high and low point players to differing degrees.

*(continued ..)*



*Experienced referees know more than just the rules (continued .. )*

## Conclusions

1. Disadvantage can vary according to the degree of disability of the player.
2. Players may gain an advantage illegally by using one of their leg stumps as a brake by applying pressure to a big wheel to slow down or steer the wheelchair.
3. Referees **must** be aware of this when observing contact and in judging advantage/disadvantage.

## Get To Know The Players and Learn To Recognise Classifications

In many instances, the official knows the players and knows their classifications. In cases where the players are not well known to him, the knowledgeable official can recognise the visible signs that tell him whether a player is a high pointer or a low pointer, or whether he has good balance or not.

The experienced officials will carefully watch the teams warming up before tip-off. Identify the players who are high point players. Just the way the player is sitting and moving in his chair and the way his chair is set up is usually all that the experienced official needs to recognise classification. For example: Has the player set himself up high in his chair? Is the player using a great number of straps to secure himself in his chair? Is the player sitting low in his seat? Are his wheels of maximum size or are they smaller than maximum size? Check the scoresheet team lists for more information.

Once play starts, the experienced official will become aware of the physical capability of a player - whether the player demonstrates that he can lean sideways, backwards or forwards to take rebounds or throw passes? These abilities may also have been visible in the pre-game team warm-ups. These are things that register in the mind of the top officials. It takes time to learn to recognise these indicators. This recognition often is subconscious - instinctive and automatic.

The experienced official will also be alert to whether a player illegally uses his lower leg function to gain an illegal advantage.

New officials must learn all they can about the points system and ensure that they understand player disability and balance. This is essential knowledge for the wheelchair basketball official. It is not possible to referee wheelchair basketball well without this knowledge.

Talk to the more experienced referees. Talk to the classifiers who attend major tournaments. Talk to the players. Learn all you can about physical disability and limb dysfunction and how this affects balance and player classification points.

See if you can observe and recognise on court the general physical attributes that have resulted in the individual player classifications. Look at the scoresheet and the player classification cards before the game to identify the low point and high point players.

Experienced referees know more than just the rules.



**The author (right) with Norbert Kucera  
Gold medal game  
Atlanta Paralympics  
1996**

*Photo Source: The author's personal collection.*



# Quick Quiz

## Test Yourself

Rules test date: October 2009

How well do you understand the contact principles?

Test yourself.

Answer **TRUE** or **FALSE** to the following questions.

1. By definition, *Crossing the path* involves a *change of direction*.
2. By definition, a screener must be stationary in order to be legal if contact occurs.
3. In order to *cross the path* legally, a player must *cover the path* of the opponent.
4. The path of a player is the area in front of the chair bounded by parallels drawn from the outside edges of the seat of his wheelchair.
5. A defender who is on a *converging path* with an opponent who controls the ball only has to *cover the path* in order to establish a legal position in that opponent's path.
6. A moving defender who *covers the path* of an opposing ball carrier by moving head-on at that opponent need not be stationary to be legal if contact occurs.
7. A screener must give a stationary opponent room to avoid contact.
8. A defender who pushes into the braking area of a moving ball carrier must allow that opponent time and distance to avoid contact.
9. In wheelchair basketball, the act of shooting ends when the ball leaves the hand of the shooter.
10. The rules for *on-ball* and *off-ball* contact are always the same.
11. It is legal to *cover the path* by wheeling in backwards across the path.
12. The distance required for a moving player to stop or change direction to avoid contact is two or three chair lengths.
13. The rules expect that the player who controls the ball must anticipate that he will be guarded.
14. To *cross the path* legally, a player must have his front castors in front of his opponent before changing direction and crossing the path.
15. A screen set against a moving defender must allow the defender time and distance to avoid contact.
16. A stationary defender sitting five metres away and in front of a moving ball carrier must allow that ball carrier time and distance to avoid contact.
17. A moving defender who is on a *converging path* with an opponent who does not control the ball has only to *get there first* to establish a legal position.
18. If a player *covers the path* of an opponent, that opponent is considered to have had time to avoid contact.
19. A slow-moving ball carrier should be allowed no more than one chair-length to avoid contact
20. A stationary defender who suddenly pushes from within a chair length into the braking area of a fast-moving opponent **who does not have the ball** must *cover the path* of that opponent to have established a legal position.

ANSWERS	IWBF Rulebook Reference	ANSWERS	IWBF Rulebook Reference
1. <b>TRUE</b>	33.6.1	11. <b>TRUE</b>	33.3
2. <b>TRUE</b>	33.8.1	12. <b>FALSE</b>	33.7
3. <b>FALSE</b>	33.6.2	13. <b>TRUE</b>	33.4.2
4. <b>TRUE</b>	33.3	14. <b>FALSE</b>	33.6.2
5. <b>TRUE</b>	33.4.3	15. <b>TRUE</b>	33.8.1
6. <b>FALSE</b>	33.4.3	16. <b>FALSE</b>	33.4
7. <b>FALSE</b>	33.8.1 and 2	17. <b>TRUE</b>	33.5.1
8. <b>TRUE</b>	33.4.1; 33.4.3.3	18. <b>TRUE</b>	33.3
9. <b>FALSE</b>	15.1;15.2;15.3	19. <b>TRUE</b>	33.7
10. <b>FALSE</b>	33.5. and 33.4	20. <b>TRUE</b>	33.5.3

**Now look up the rule for any question that you got wrong.  
Check the explanation of the contact situation in this *Principles of Contact* book.**