



# 2025 - 2026 SYC BASKETBALL REFEREE TRAINING

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## Course Objectives

- This is a training course meant to discuss basketball rules and game management that will benefit you as a Springfield Youth Club basketball referee.
- There is no intent to convince you that this is the same quality of course you would encounter if making application to one of the professional organizations.
- We want to prepare you the best that we can so that you can help our youth play safe, have fun and learn something worthwhile.

## Officials' Code of Ethics

SYC Officials during recreation events are truly participants in the educational development of our local youth. As such, we must exercise a high level of self-discipline, independence and responsibility. The purpose of this Code is to establish guidelines for ethical standards of conduct for all SYC Recreational Officials.

1. Officials shall know both the rules of the game and the mechanics necessary to enforce the rules, and shall exercise authority in an impartial, firm and controlled manner.
2. Officials shall work with each other and their Recreational Association Administrators in a constructive and cooperative manner.
3. Officials shall uphold the honor and dignity of the profession in all interactions with youth-athletes, SYC Administrators, parents, coaches and colleagues.
4. Officials shall prepare themselves both physically and mentally, shall dress neatly and appropriately, and shall conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the expectations of the SYC Administrators.
5. Officials shall be punctual and professional in the fulfillment of all contractual obligations.
6. Officials shall remain mindful that their conduct influences the respect that players, coaches and our public hold for the entire organization.
7. Officials shall, while enforcing the rules of play, remain aware of the inherent risk of injury that competition poses to players. Where appropriate, they shall inform event management of conditions or situations that appear unreasonably hazardous.
8. Officials shall take reasonable steps to educate themselves in the recognition of emergency conditions that might arise during the course of competition.

## Officials' General Duties

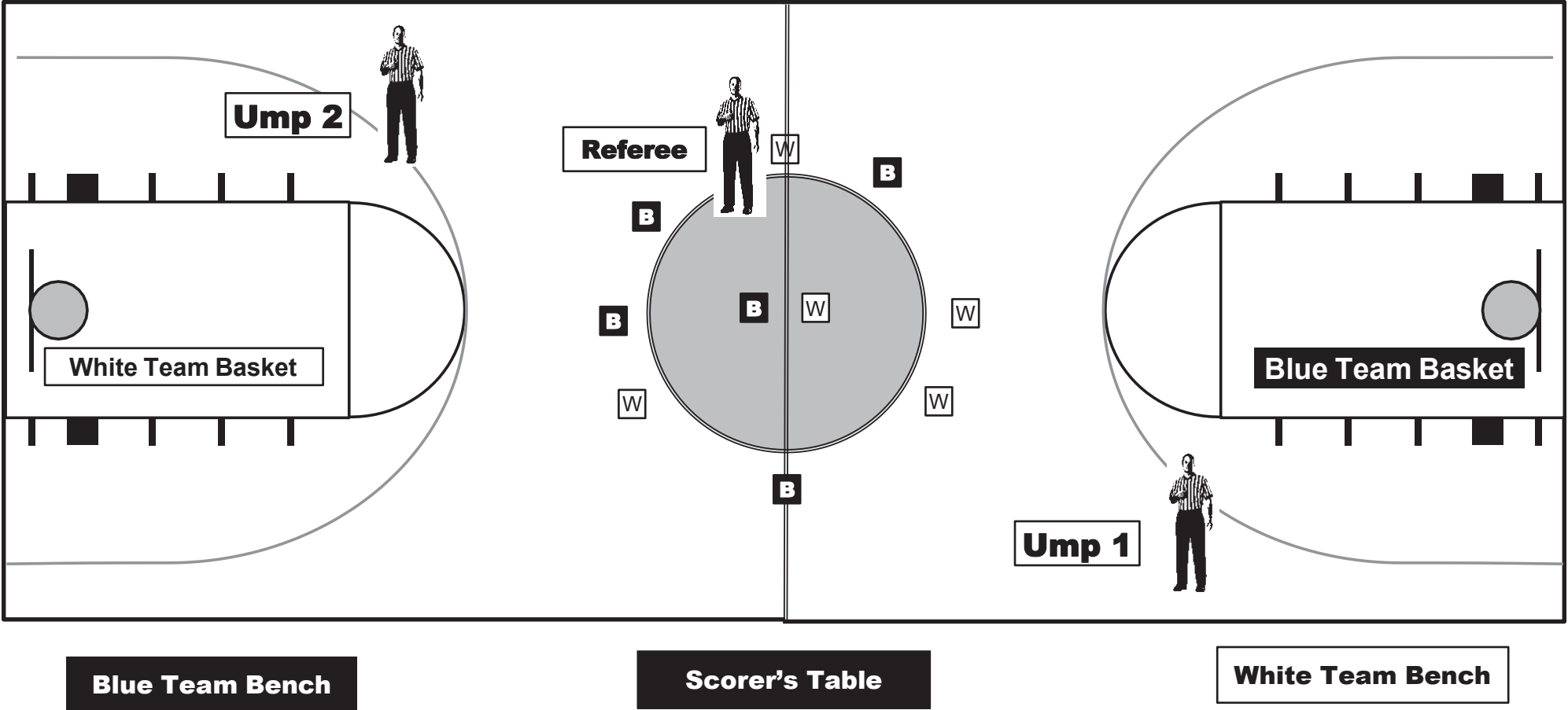
- Ensuring the Score Table is manned, knowledgeable and ready
- Conducting Facility and Player safety check
- Putting the ball into play
- Determining when the ball becomes dead
- Prohibiting practice during a dead ball
- Administering penalties
- Granting time outs
- Beckoning substitutes to enter the game
- Signaling a three point goal (if allowed)
- Silently and visibly counting seconds
  - Throw-in (visible count)
  - Free throw (visible count - hand only)
  - Back court (visible count)
  - Closely guarded (visible count)
  - Lane violation (silent count)

## Pre-game Activities / Starting the Game

- Arrive at the game site no later than 15 minutes early.
  - Remind Coaches to provide score table help.
  - Check to see if names/numbers are in book.
  - Ensure table personnel have know-how (most important running score and fouls; also, when/how to start and stop clock).
- Review and discuss with partners and coaches SYC supplemental rules for age group unique items.
- Ensure players are warming up opposite their bench.
- Select a game ball (SYC provides).
  - Circumference 29.5" for most boys games, 28.5" for all girls and some younger boys games.
  - Spherical & deeply-pebbled
  - Proper inflation (Test: measure bottom of ball to be 6 ft. from playing surface and drop. Rebound should carry top of ball to location 49 to 54 inches from playing surface.)
- Start the game on time!!!! (This means tip-off. Sometimes clearing the court two minutes early is the best way to help the coaches get their lineup.)

# 1st Half / Start of Game / Jump Ball - 3 Referee Crew Positioning

Placement of team benches in relation to 1st half baskets and officials' responsibilities to start game



Referee:

1. Whistle to signal game about to start, drop whistle from mouth.
2. Line them up and freeze them.
3. Step in; give directions and point to each team's basket.
4. Toss and you freeze.
5. Assume trail.

Ump 1:

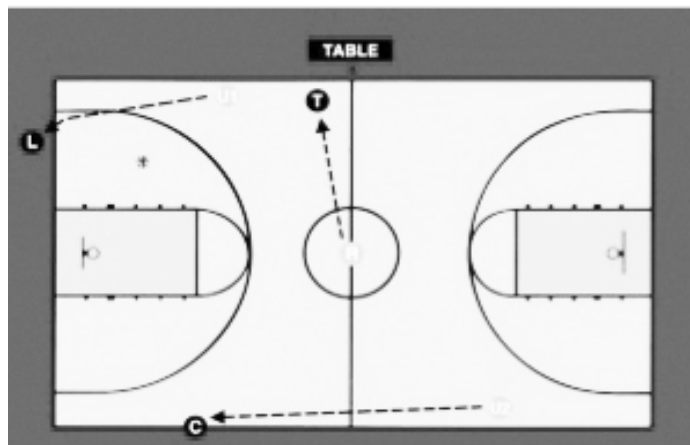
1. Ensure Scorer's table personnel are ready and alert to start of game.
2. Raise hand to signal the Ref "ready to start" and prep starting of clock.
3. Monitor toss; if fair, drop hand when legally touched by jumper – – if not, blow whistle to re-start game.
4. Assume lead or "C" position.

Ump 2:

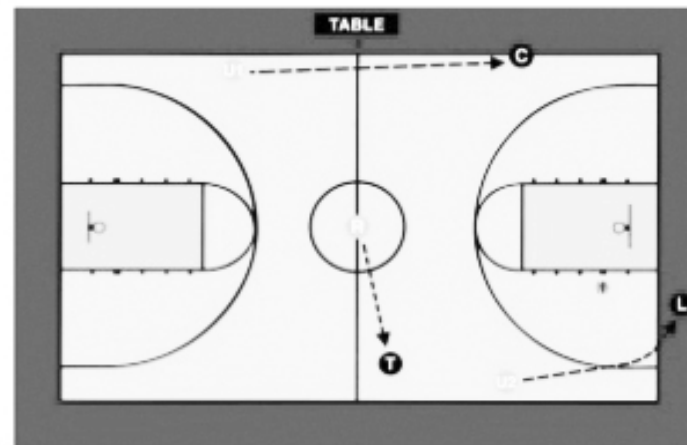
Watches 8 non jumpers / Assume lead or "C" position.

## Positions After Jump Ball - 3 Referee Crew Positioning

Ball goes left



Ball goes right

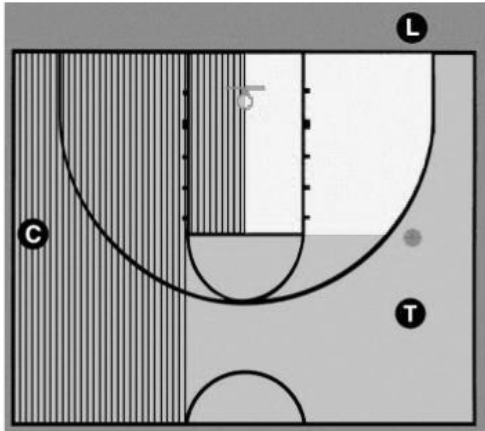


R (tossing official) always goes into T position

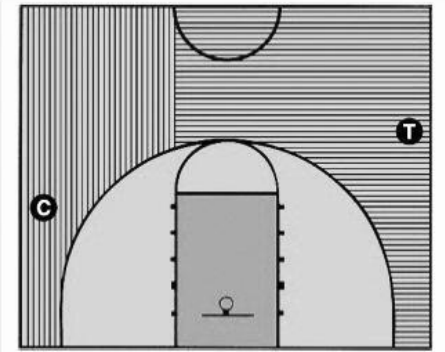
# Coverage Areas - 3 Referee Crew Positioning

## Primary Coverage Areas

Both C and T should close down on shots



## Three-Point Shot Coverage

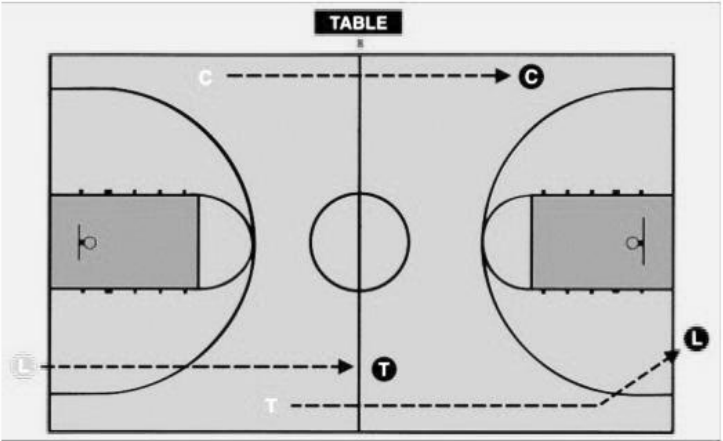


If both C and T indicate the 3-pt attempt, T referees defense on shooter and stays with shot; C releases and covers rebounding

C/T should mirror the other official's "good" signal



## Coverage on Transition



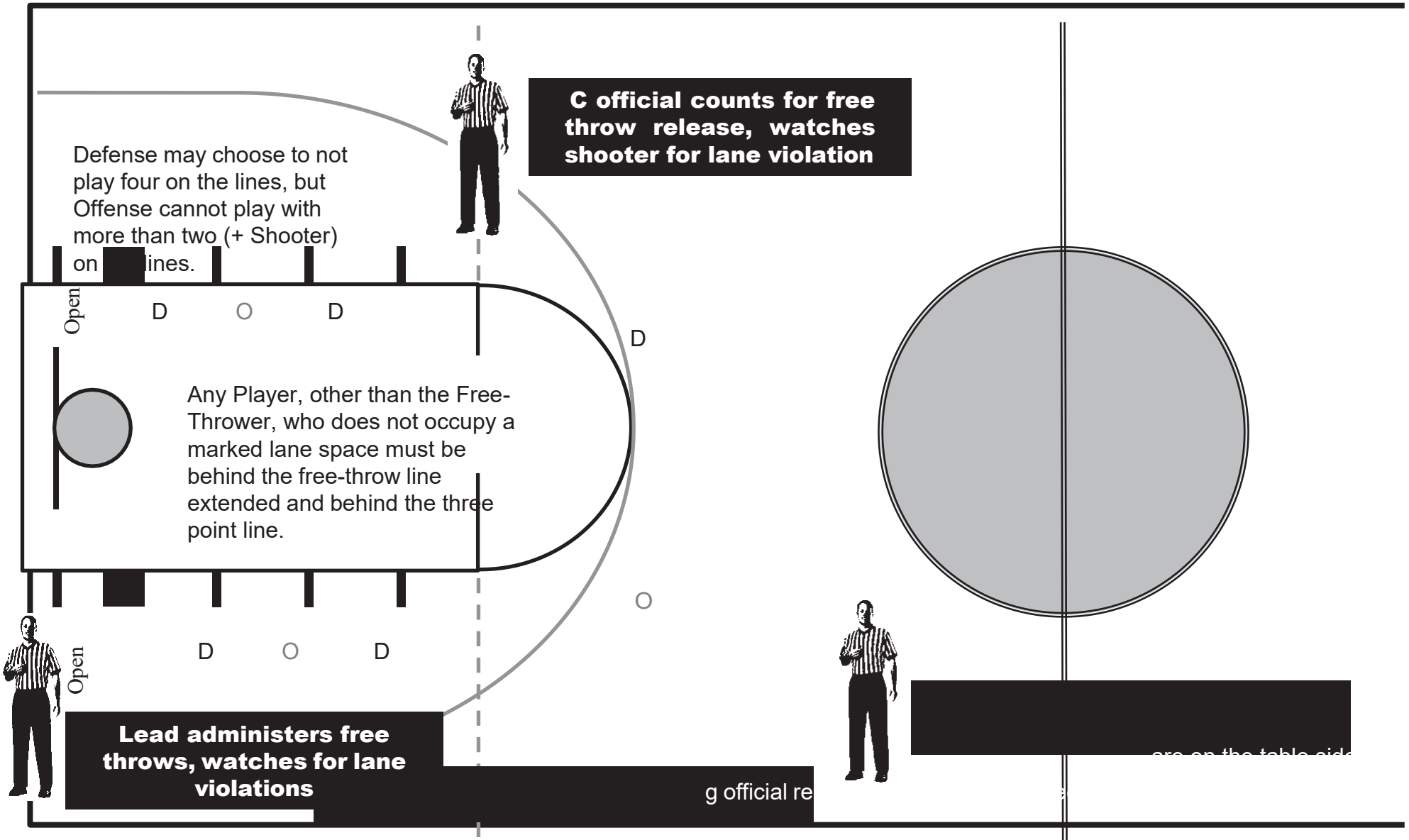
## Press Coverage

C stays in backcourt

L should have deepest player in front and boxed-in



# Foul Shooting Areas of Responsibility - 3 Referee Crew Positioning



**C official counts for free throw release, watches shooter for lane violation**

Defense may choose to not play four on the lines, but Offense cannot play with more than two (+ Shooter) on lines.

Any Player, other than the Free-Thrower, who does not occupy a marked lane space must be behind the free-throw line extended and behind the three point line.

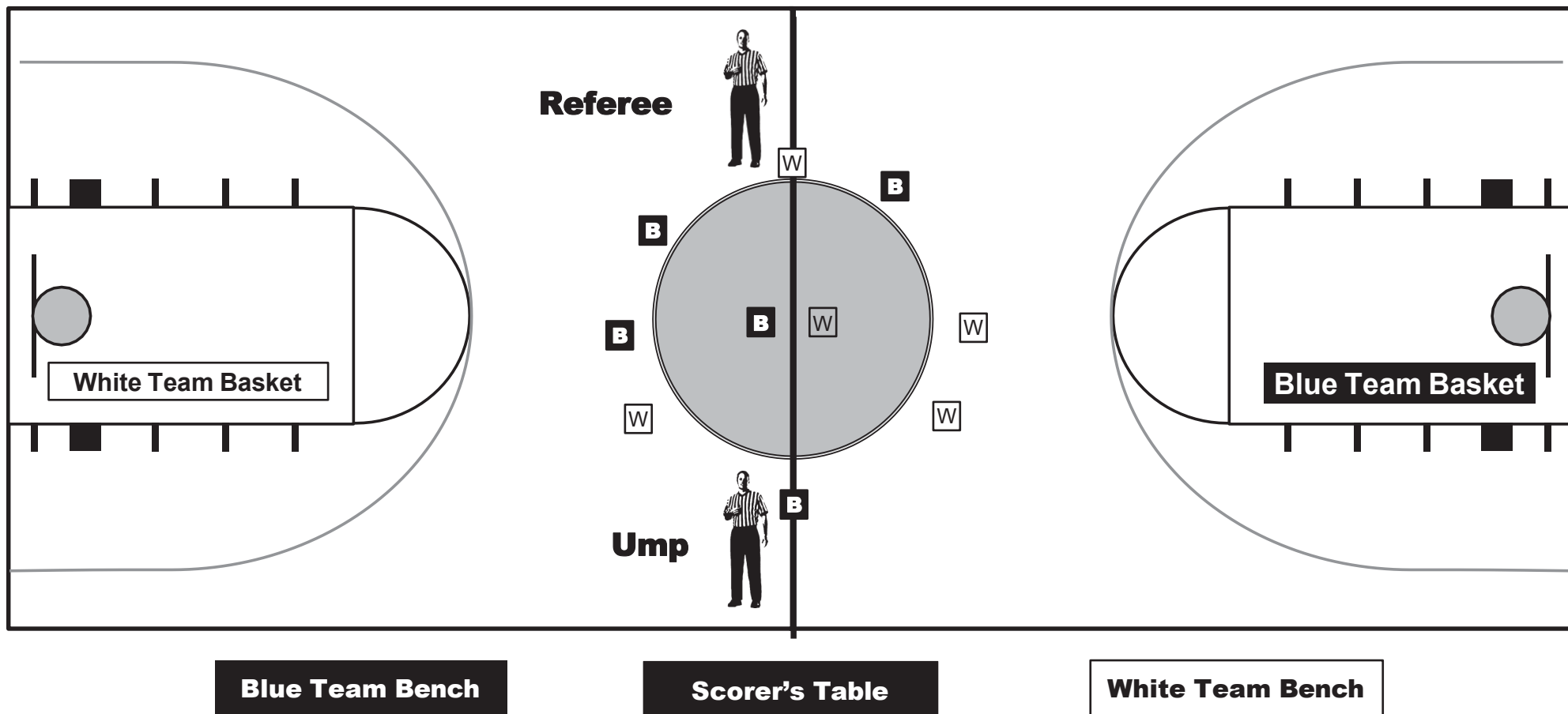
**Lead administers free throws, watches for lane violations**

are on the table side

g official re

## 1st Half / Start of Game - 2 Referee Crew

Placement of team benches in relation to  
1st half baskets and official's  
responsibilities to start game



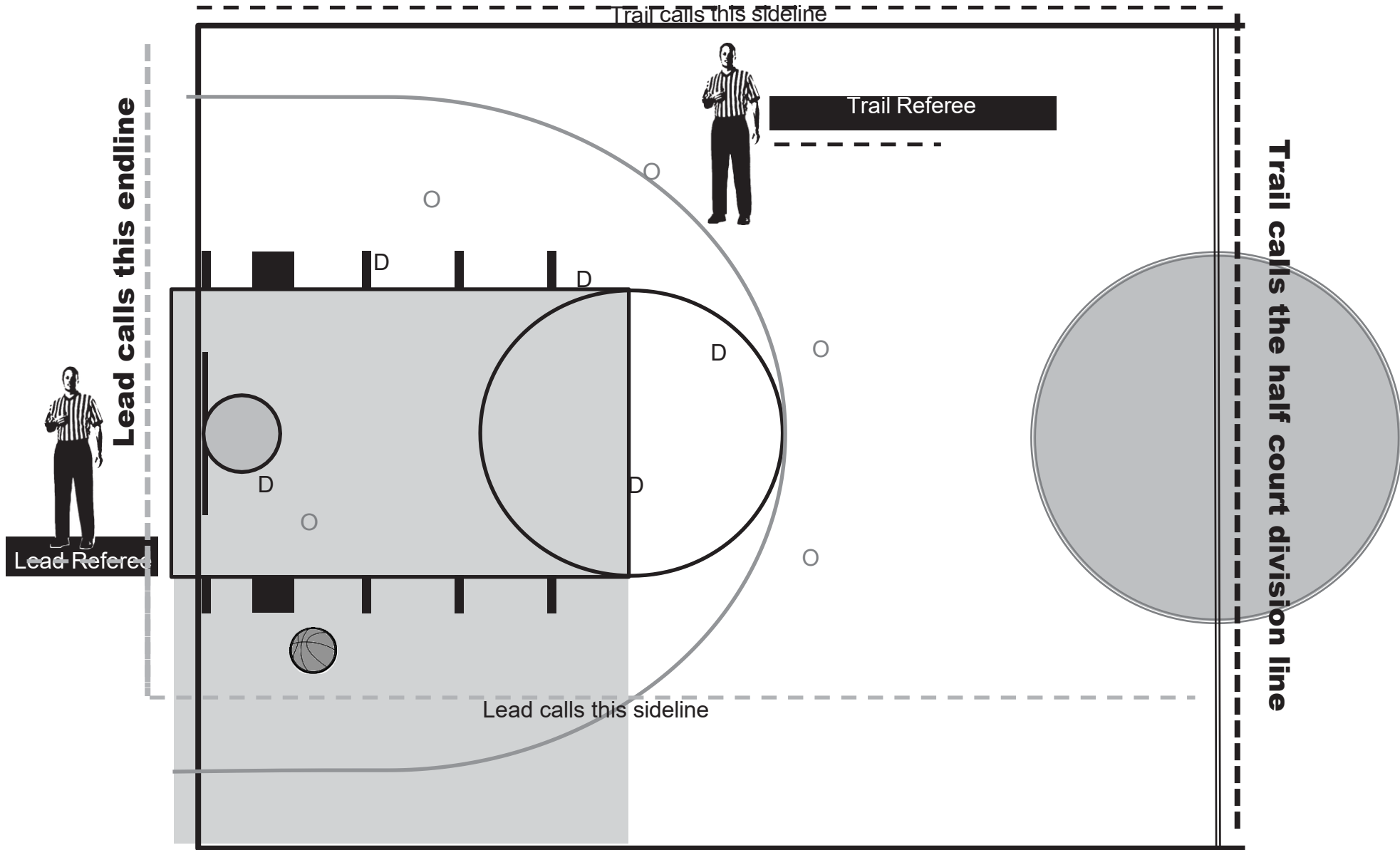
- Referee:
1. Whistle to signal game about to start, drop whistle from mouth.
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5. Normally assume trail.

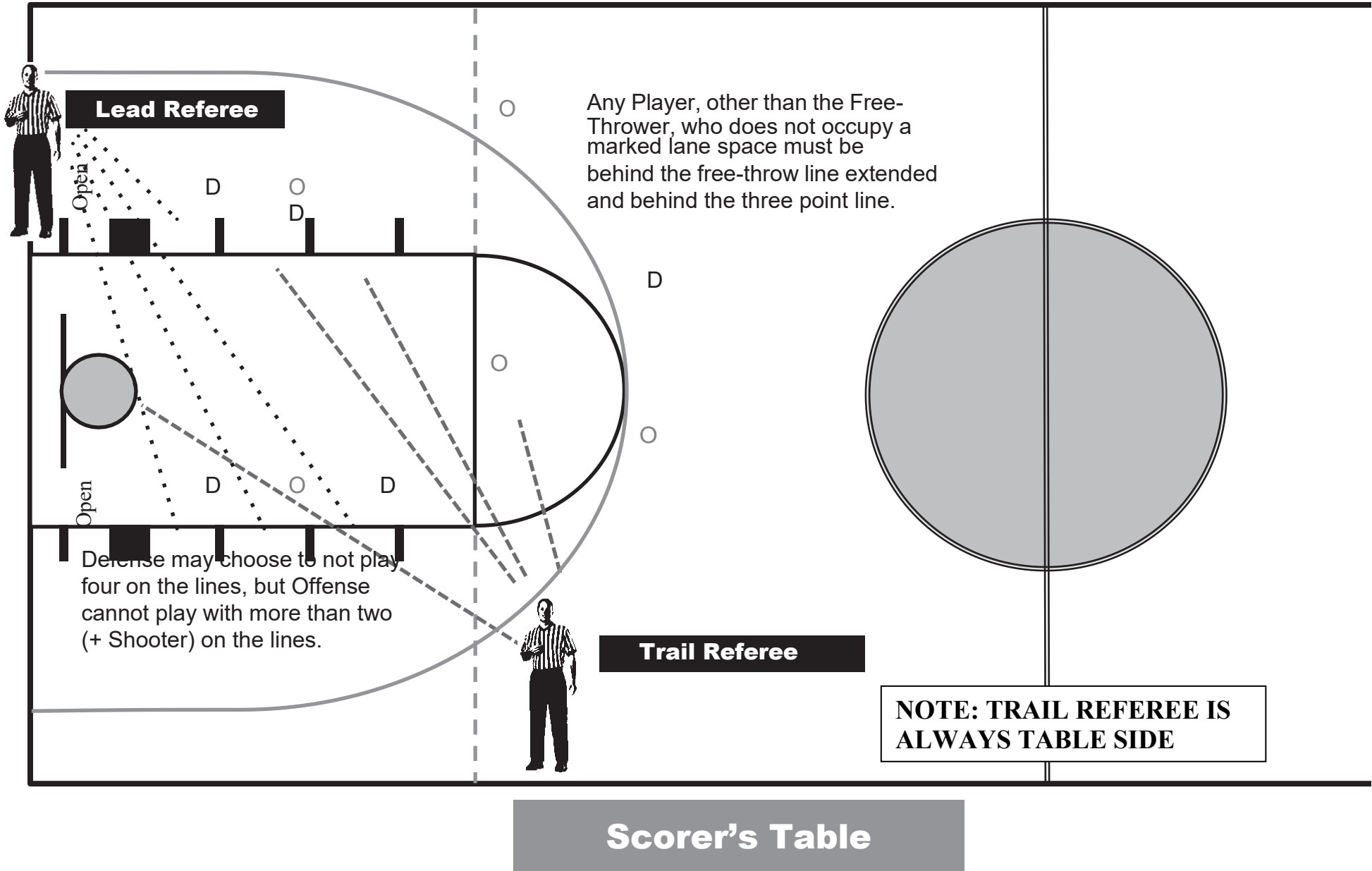
Ump:

1. Ensure Scorer's table personnel are ready and alert to start of game.
2. Raise hand to signal the Ref "ready to start" and prep starting of clock.
3. Monitor toss; if fair, drop hand when legally touched by jumper – – if not, blow whistle to re-start game.
4. Normally assume lead.

Playing the game, basic areas of responsibility - 2 Referee Crew



# Foul Shooting – Areas of Responsibility - 2 Referee Crew



## Playing the game

- For definition purposes, the “Lead” official is positioned on the end line under the target basket, and has the shaded area.
- The “Trail” official is in the mid court area and has everything else.
- For “out of bounds” calls, Lead has the closest end line and the sideline on his/her side of the court.
- For “out of bounds” calls, Trail has the other sideline and division line in case the ball goes back court.
- Referee positions, relative to the sidelines, are governed by where the ball is put into play. Obtain eye-contact with partner, and ensure position before making a “live ball”.
- Switch positions on fouls. Do not switch on violations or out of bounds calls.
- Switching is sometimes time consuming, awkward and silly looking on courts where the score table is on the end line. It is permissible to omit this switch. However, the referees need to discuss and agree on this issue prior to game start.
- Trail has the responsibility to watch the net for score.
- Lead should not move his/her eyes from the players to see the net.

Violations and fouls are the 2 types of basketball rules infractions.

- Violations - Most violations are committed by the team with possession of the ball, when a player mishandles the ball or makes an illegal move. (Some examples - traveling, double dribble, loses ball out of bounds, steps out of bounds, 3 second lane violation, free throw violations, to name a few.) The typical penalty for a violation is loss of the ball to the other team.
- Fouls are either personal (common or non-common) or technical.
  - A personal foul is committed by a player. All personal fouls involve contact and all personal fouls occur when the ball is live except for a foul on or by an airborne shooter.

• **Tip:** Try to keep focused on your area of responsibility and resist the temptation to watch the ball. Main focus is on the defense.

• **Tip:** Move to see between players, i.e. get the angle rather than get closer. Don’t lean or bend move to get a better angle.

## Playing the game, continued

- A personal foul is either common or non-common.
  - Common personal fouls include player, team control and single defensive personal fouls not committed on a shooter.
  - Non-common personal fouls are a) intentional or flagrant and/or b) committed on a shooter, or part of a double, simultaneous or multiple foul.
- A technical foul is charged to a team or individual team personnel (coach, member, support staff). A technical foul may be intentional or flagrant. A technical foul may also be part of a double or simultaneous foul. All fouls committed when the ball is dead are technical fouls except those that involve illegal contact committed on or by an airborne shooter.

### Administration of free throws

- When a foul is called and free throws are to be taken, the referee that made the call has immediate responsibilities:
- Signal for a dead ball by blowing short/sharp whistle, raising closed fist. Signal mechanics to partner and players and raise fingers to show number of shots to be taken.
- Report to the score table for documentation. For SYC purposes, the referee need only travel to where he/she is easily seen by table personnel and in a loud/clear voice announce color of fouling team, number (and give sharp hand signals), and announce shots awarded.
- Other referee will secure the ball, move into Lead and manage lining up players.

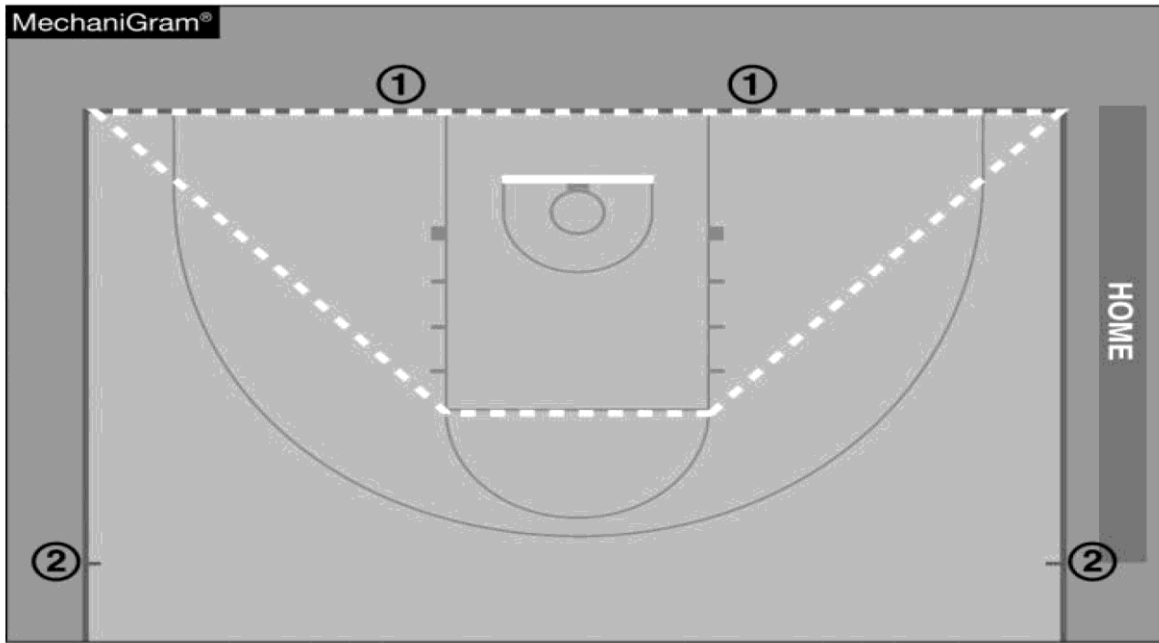
### Basketball teams will shoot two free throws for common fouls when in the “bonus.”

- In addition to awarding two foul shots for all common fouls when in the bonus, teams will reach the bonus when their opponent commits five fouls in each quarter and team fouls will reset at the end of each quarter.  
*(Previously, teams were awarded the one-and-one bonus when their opponents committed seven fouls in a half and two foul shots when 10 fouls were committed each half.)*
- When a violation or a non-shooting foul is called, the referee will announce color, spot and point to the location. In SYC it is permissible to play the “bump method” in which one referee is not required to run the full length of the court. Discuss beforehand.
- During a throw-in, the “spot” is a 3 ft. rectangle along the in-bounding line as deep as the player wants/can go. Movement out of this “spot” is another violation.

## Playing the game, continued

- If the thrower cannot get adequate depth, the referee must project an imaginary restraining line that the defense cannot violate.
- On a throw-in pass the defense cannot have any part of their person through the inbound side of the boundary line until the ball has been released and in court.
  - 1st violation = team warning for Delay of Game (DOG)
  - 2nd violation of team = technical foul
  - Defense reaches over line and touches ball = automatic technical foul
  - Defense reaches over line and touches in-bounding player = intentional personal foul
  - Thrower reaches ball over boundary line, and defensive player touches or grasps ball = NO VIOLATION
- After a made basket the in-bounding team is allowed to run the end line and not maintain a “spot”. They can even throw it along the end line to another player, out of bounds. This privilege is not lost when play is disrupted by a time out.
- Never administer a throw-in under a basket or in the lane.

# Playing the game – Throw-In Spots – Proper Locations



**It is important that officials put the ball in play at the correct spot for a throw-in.**

Coaches design specific plays and offensive/defensive strategies based on where the ball will be put in play. It is therefore essential for game officials to be diligent in administering the ball at the proper throw-in location, particularly following time-outs.

With the adoption of Rules 7-5-2 through 7-5-4, coaches, players and officials are reminded of the following rules governing throw-in locations:

**A. Any time a team causes the ball to go out of bounds** in either the front court or the back court, the throw-in occurs from the spot where the ball went out of bounds.

**B. When a violation by either team, a foul before the bonus by either team or dead ball (i.e., an inadvertent whistle or a held ball) occurs that will result in a throw-in.**

- 1. The throw-in is to be in the team's front court or backcourt, it shall be at either the nearest 28-foot mark along each sideline or the nearest spot 3 feet outside the lane line and the end line.**

**Two designated throw-in spots in the frontcourt only.**




















### **Rule 7-6-6 A Throw-in “Error” now “Correctable”**

*If a throw-in is administered to the wrong team, officials will now be allowed to “fix” this error BEFORE THE FIRST DEAD BALL after the ball becomes live, as long as there has not been a change in possession.*



# OFFICIAL NFHS BASKETBALL SIGNALS

<b>Starting and stopping clock</b>	<b>Start clock 1</b> 	<b>Stop clock 2</b> 	<b>Stop clock for jump/held ball 3</b> 	<b>4</b> 	<b>5</b> 	<b>Information</b>	<b>Directional signal 6</b> 	
	<b>Throw-in and free-throw designated spot/violation 7</b> 	<b>Move along end-line on throw-in 8</b> 	<b>Visible counts 9</b> 	<b>Beckoning substitutes 10</b> 	<b>60-second time-out 11</b> 		<b>30-second time-out 12</b> 	<b>Not closely guarded 13</b> 
	<b>Tipped ball 14</b> 	<b>Shooting/scoring</b>	<b>No score 15</b> 	<b>Goal Counts 16</b> 	<b>Points scored 17</b> 		<b>18</b> 	
	<b>Use 1 or 2 fingers after signal</b>		<b>3-Point attempt score</b>	<b>3-Point made</b>				

Shooting/scoring	Signal free throw 20		Delayed lane violation 21		22		Illegal use of hands 31		Hand check 32		Holding 33	
												
	Violations		Violations		Traveling violation		Illegal use of hands		Hand check		Holding	
Violations	Illegal dribble 23		Palming carry 24		Back court violation 25		3-Second violation 26		Blocking 34		35	
												
	Violations		Violations		Back court violation		3-Second violation		Blocking		Pushing charging	
Fouls	5-Second violation 27		10-Second violation 28		Excessive swinging elbows 29		Kicking 30		Intentional foul 38		Double foul 39	
												
	5-Second violation		10-Second violation		Excessive swinging elbows		Kicking		Intentional foul		Double foul	
										Technical foul 40		
												
										Technical foul		

PlayPic® PlayPics courtesy of Referee magazine

**Note: Signal table above does not contain the “faking being fouled signal”.**

## Issues, Questions and Answers

### **Incidental Contact and the Tower Philosophy**

The mere fact that contact occurs does not constitute a foul. When 10 players are moving rapidly in a limited area, some contact is certain to occur. Contact that occurs unintentionally in an effort by an opponent to reach a loose ball, or contact which may result when opponents are in equally favorable positions to perform normal offensive or defensive movements, should not be considered illegal, even though the contact may be severe. Similarly, contact that does not hinder the opponent from participating in normal defensive or offensive movements should be considered incidental.

The Tower Philosophy should continue to be implemented in all contact situations. Did the player causing contact gain an advantage or put an opponent at a disadvantage; or, if a foul is not called, will the contact lead to rough play. If the official can answer “yes” to any of the above when observing contact, then a foul should be called.

### **Hand Checking / Illegal use of the hands**

Displacement is the key word. If a player is displaced, it is a foul. Displacement applies to both offensive and defensive players. Observe the entire play, especially when responsible for off-ball coverage. When a ball handler’s rhythm, speed, balance or quickness are affected, it is a foul.

- When a defensive player keeps a hand on an opponent, it is a foul.
- When a defensive player puts two hands on a dribbler, it is a foul.
- When a defensive player continually jabs by extending his/her arm and placing a hand on the opponent, it is a foul.
- When a defensive player contacts an offensive player more than once with the same hand or alternating hands, it is a foul.

### **Correctable Errors: (2-10)**

**Art. 1** Officials may correct an error if a rule is inadvertently set aside and results in:

- A. Failure to award a merited free throw.
- B. Awarding an unmerited free throw.
- C. Permitting the wrong player to attempt a free throw.
- D. Attempting a free throw at the wrong basket. Erroneously counting or canceling a score.

## Issues, Questions and Answers - Continued

**Art. 2** In order to correct any of the official's errors listed in article 1, such error must be recognized by an official during the first dead ball after the clock has properly started.

**Art. 3** If in Article 1 the error is made while the clock is running and the ball is dead, it must be recognized by an official before the second live ball.

**Art. 4** If the error is a free throw by the wrong player or at the wrong basket, or the awarding of an unmerited free throw, the free throw and the activity during it, other than unsporting, flagrant, intentional or technical fouls, shall be cancelled.

**Art. 5** Points scored, consumed time and additional activity, which may occur prior to the recognition of an error, shall not be nullified. Errors because of free-throw attempts by the wrong player or at the wrong basket shall be corrected by applying 8-1 & 2.

**Art. 6** If an error is corrected, play shall be resumed from the point at which it was interrupted to rectify the error, unless it involves awarding a merited free throw(s) and there has been no change of team possession since the error was made, in which case play shall resume as after any free-throws attempt(s).

### **Verticality and the Shooter**

Officials must stay with the shooter until he/she returns to the floor, to ensure no illegal activity has occurred. However, officials must not reward the offensive player when he/she initiates contact and the defender has established and maintained his/her legal guarding position.

### **Coach and Bench Decorum**

It is important for officials to communicate with coaches and it is appropriate for this to occur on occasion during the game. Coaches must understand that every call cannot be explained and a continuous dialogue cannot occur. It is okay for coaches and players to ask questions, provided it is done in a courteous and respectful manner. However, if a coach or player begins to move towards unsporting comments or behavior, then it is imperative that the official be firm. Sometimes a warning is appropriate and sometimes a technical foul is necessary.

**Officials must remain vigilant of taunting, baiting and unsporting behavior of players, bench personnel and fans.**

### **Can a personal foul be called if there is no contact?**

In order for a personal foul to be called, there must be contact.

## Issues, Questions and Answers - Continued

### **How can a defender draw a charge on the offense?**

The defender must establish a legal guarding position by having both feet on the court with his/her torso facing the offensive player. The defender does not have to be stationary; he/she can be moving laterally, backwards and/or can be jumping vertically, and can turn to absorb contact, and does not move into the offensive player.

### **What if a player shoots an air ball?**

If a player takes a legitimate shot and the result is an air ball, it is not a violation if he/she is the first to touch or catch the ball.

### **On a rebound, PUSHING, commonly called “over the back”, is a foul:**

“On the back”, i.e., pushing, may be a foul; “over the back” is not a foul. A player can out-jump or reach over the top of another without causing contact and legally secure a rebound. Contact that displaces a player who is in an established rebounding position, and prohibits that player from securing the rebound, is a foul.

### **Moving Screen / Foul:**

A moving screen is a foul only when there is illegal contact. A moving screen without contact is not a foul or violation.

### **During a throw-in, if the thrower-in steps on the line, is it a violation?**

Since the sidelines and end lines are out of bounds, the thrower-in may step on the line (but not over it onto the floor) during the throw-in.

Rule 7-6-6 A Throw-in “Error” now “Correctable”. If a throw-in is administered to the wrong team, officials will now be allowed to “fix” this error BEFORE THE FIRST DEAD BALL after the ball becomes live, as long as there has not been a change in possession.

### **If the ball hits a player’s foot or leg, is it a violation?**

Kicking the ball with any part of the leg is a violation only when it is an intentional act. Accidentally striking the ball with the foot or leg is not a violation.

### **If a player remains in the lane for 3 seconds, is it a violation?**

Allowance shall be made for a player who, having been in the lane for less than 3 seconds, dribbles in or makes a move to try for a goal. There can be no 3-second violation during rebounding action or while the ball is in the back court.

## Issues, Questions and Answers - Continued

**Is it a back court violation, if, in the front court, one offensive player passes to another and the ball is deflected by the defense and then touches an offensive player prior to going into the back court, and then is first touched by an offensive player?**

Yes. If the offense is the last to touch the ball in the front court and the first to touch it in the back court, it is a back court violation. However, during a throw-in if the offense does not gain possession in the front court, but merely touches the ball in the front court and then recovers it in the back court, it is not a violation.

**A Referee shall not permit any team member to wear equipment or apparel which, in his/her judgment is dangerous or confusing to other players. Examples:**

- A guard cast or brace made of hard and unyielding substances - even though covered with soft padding - when worn on the elbow, hand, fingers, wrist or forearm.
- Head wear -medical, cosmetic or religious - allowable if not abrasive, hard or dangerous to other players and which is attached in such a way it is highly unlikely that it will come off during play.
- Jewelry shall not be worn. Religious and medical alert medals are not considered jewelry. A religious medal must be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical alert must be taped and may be visible.
- The referee shall not permit any team member to participate if in his/her judgment items such as a player's fingernails or hair style may constitute a safety concern.
- Officials should check players during pre-game warm-up to prevent delays during the game.

**If a diving player secures a loose ball and slides on the floor, is it a traveling violation?**

A player has not traveled if his/her momentum causes them to slide on the floor while diving for a loose ball.

**The following are guidelines to help address some problem areas:**

### **Illegal use of the hands**

- When a defensive player keeps a hand on an opponent, it is a foul.
- When a defensive player puts two hands on a dribbler, it is a foul.
- When a defensive player continually jabs by extending his/her arm and placing a hand on the opponent, it is a foul.
- When a defensive player contacts an offensive player more than once with the same hand or alternating hands, it is a foul.

## Issues, Questions and Answers - Continued

### Post play

- The key word is displacement. If a player is displaced, it is a foul. Displacement applies to offensive and defensive players (pushing).
- When an offensive player uses a swim move, elbows, forearms or backs down the opponent, it is a foul on the offensive player.
- When a defensive player holds, undercuts, displaces by a knee or a forearm in the back, it is a foul on the defensive player.

### If the ball hits the top of the backboard, is it out of bounds?

- NO. The top, bottom, and sides of the backboard are in bounds. A ball is out of bounds if it crosses over the top of the backboard, or if it hits the supports. It is also an out of bounds violation if the ball contacts the back of the backboard or wiring.

### Screening

- When a player uses arms, hands, hips or shoulders to force through a screen or to hold or push a screener, it is a team control foul. • When contact results because a player sets a screen while moving, it is a team control foul.
- When a screener takes a position so close to a moving opponent that this opponent cannot avoid contact by stopping or changing direction, it is a team control foul.
- When a player sets a screen outside the visual field of a stationary opponent and does not allow this opponent a normal step to move, it is a team control foul.
- A player who is screened within his/her visual field is expected to avoid contact by going around the screener. • There cannot be a foul unless there is illegal contact.

### Protect the shooter

- Referees must stay with the shooter until he/she returns to the floor, to ensure no illegal activity occurs.
- Contact that does not permit the shooter to return to the floor in his/her entitled space is illegal. (VERTICALITY)

## Issues, Questions and Answers - Continued

### **Time-outs (Rule 5-8, 9 &12)**

- Time-outs can only be called by a player (not bench personnel) or the Head Coach during a dead ball or the calling team's possession.
- Time-outs in excess of the allotted number may be requested and shall be granted at the expense of a technical foul for each occasion. (Administered after the Time out)
- Make it a point to visit each Coach and let them know when they have no time outs remaining .

### **Held ball (Definition 4-25) A held ball occurs when:**

- Opponents have their hand/s so firmly on the ball that control cannot be obtained without undue roughness.
- An opponent places his/her hand/s on the ball and prevents an airborne player from throwing the ball or releasing it on a try.

### **Rebounding (Definition 4-36) To obtain or maintain legal rebounding position, a player may not:**

- Displace, charge, or push an opponent.
- Extend shoulders, hips, knees or extend the arms or elbow fully or partially in a position other than vertical so that the freedom of movement of an opponent is hindered when contact with the arms or elbows occurs.
- Every player is entitled to a spot on the floor, provided the player gets there first without illegally contacting an opponent.

### **Verticality (Definition 4-44) applies to a legal position**

- The defender should not be penalized for leaving the floor vertically or having his/her hands and arms extended within his/her vertical plane.
- The offensive player, whether on the floor or airborne, may not clear out or cause contact within the defender's vertical plane, which is a foul.
- The defender may not "belly up" or use the lower part of the body or arms to cause contact outside his/her vertical plane, which is a foul.
- The player with the ball is to be given no more protection or consideration than the defender in judging which player has violated the rules.

## Issues, Questions and Answers

### **Continuous motion (CM) (Definition 4-11)**

- Applies to a try for goal, but has no significance unless there is a foul by the defense during the interval which begins the habitual throwing movement of the try start and ends when the ball is clearly in flight.
- If an opponent fouls after a player has started a try for goal, he/she is permitted to complete the customary arm movement, and if pivoting or stepping when fouled, may complete the usual foot or body movement in any activity while holding the ball.
- However, it is not a violation of CM if another dribble is taken before the attempt for try is made.
- CM does not apply if a teammate fouls after a player has started a try for goal and before the ball is in flight. The ball becomes dead immediately.

### **Closely-guarded:**

- Is a five second count when a player in control of the ball in his/her team's front court and is guarded by an opponent who is within 6 feet of the player who is holding or dribbling the ball. If the dribbler switches defenders, you continue the count.

### **Direction error:**

- If a mistake is made (theirs or yours), Rule 4.5.4 states the Officials shall correct the error when observed and everything counts as if they were always going in the correct direction.

### **Back court:**

- A player is in his/her back court until both feet and the ball have crossed into the front court.

## 2025-2026 Points of Emphasis

### Contact on the Ball Handler

Continued emphasis is placed on the consistent enforcement of illegal contact involving the ball handler. While hand-checking remains a known concern, other forms of illegal contact must also be recognized and penalized. Defenders often use their hips, torsos, or other parts of the body to displace, redirect, or impede a ball handler's freedom of movement. These tactics must be identified and addressed in accordance with the rules.

Particular attention is required during late-game scenarios. Not all fouls committed in the closing moments of a contest are necessarily intentional. Determinations regarding intentional fouls must be based on the act itself, rather than on the intent or verbal instructions from coaching staff. The presence of directives such as "foul," "red," or "scramble" does not automatically classify the resulting contact as intentional.

If the contact constitutes a legitimate attempt to play the ball or to defend an opponent — either on the ball or away from it — it should be adjudicated as a common foul. Standards for evaluating contact must remain consistent throughout the game, including in its final moments. The strategic intent of one team to stop the clock must be weighed against the opposing team's interest in allowing the clock to run.

Conversely, contact that is excessive, clearly removes an opponent's apparent advantage, or does not constitute a legitimate basketball play should be classified as an intentional foul. Instructional emphasis must be placed on teaching players how to commit fouls within the parameters of the rules.

### Bench Decorum, Communication, and Player Altercations

Ongoing concerns have been noted regarding bench decorum, improper communication with officials, and incidents involving player altercations. All team personnel, including coaching staff and bench players, are expected to uphold a standard of sportsmanship through disciplined behavior, clear expectations and structured preparation.

#### *Bench Decorum and Communication*

Bench decorum remains a significant point of emphasis. Officials are expected to take a proactive role in managing coach and bench behavior, particularly regarding the conduct of head and assistant coaches. Rule 4-48 (Warning for Coach/Team Conduct) should be applied early and consistently to prevent escalation and maintain game control.

Effective communication between coaches and officials should be established prior to the contest and maintained throughout. A professional and respectful tone is expected. When reasonable rules-based inquiries are made by coaches (e.g., “Can you watch the screening?”), a simple verbal acknowledgment or nonverbal gesture such as a nod is generally sufficient.

Rules-based questions—such as, “What did my player do wrong on that illegal screen?”—are appropriate and should receive a clear and informative response. These interactions support the educational purpose of the game. In contrast, rhetorical questions or comments not seeking clarification (e.g., “What’s it going to take to get a foul called?” or “It’s getting rough out there”) do not require a response.

### *Coach on the Floor*

Rule 10-5 delineates the privileges and restrictions for head coaches and bench personnel. Only the head coach is permitted to stand and provide instructions to players during live ball play. This communication must be carried out in a professional and sportsmanlike manner. All other personnel, including assistant coaches and team members not actively participating in play, must remain seated except during rule-allowed situations (e.g., during time-outs or spontaneous reactions to exceptional play).

This emphasis seeks not to restrict enthusiasm but to preserve order and promote respect for the game. Adherence to coaching box boundaries is essential to maintaining safety and fairness. An increasing number of incidents have been observed involving coaches stepping onto the court during live play. Such behavior introduces potential safety concerns and must be addressed through rule enforcement.

### *Coach Responsibilities Before and During a Fight*

The head coach holds primary responsibility for the prevention and de-escalation of potential altercations. Proactive planning is expected, including the designation of specific duties for assistant coaches in the event of a fight. One assistant coach may be tasked with managing on-court players, while others may be assigned to control bench personnel. Such role assignments serve to prevent mass disqualifications and maintain order during disruptive incidents.

### **Faking Being Fouled**

In the previous season, the NFHS Basketball Rules Committee adopted Rule 4-49, Warning for Faking Being Fouled, to address unsporting acts where players simulate illegal contact in an attempt to deceive officials and gain a competitive advantage. These actions include embellishing contact on block/charge plays, simulating impact during shooting attempts, or using movements such as a 'head bob' to draw a foul. Such conduct compromises the integrity of the game and places undue influence on officiating decisions. A corresponding signal (#15) was also introduced to assist with enforcement.

For the 2025–26 season, this point of emphasis is reaffirmed, with renewed focus on consistent adjudication across all levels of play. Faking being fouled may occur by offensive or defensive players, and must be addressed in accordance with approved procedures and

NFHS guidelines.

## Types of Faking Being Fouled

Three primary categories of Faking Being Fouled have been identified:

### *Head Bob*

This infraction occurs when a player in control of the ball simulates contact by quickly snapping the head backward. In this case, the faking signal (#15) should be displayed immediately, and the whistle should be sounded concurrently. If this is the first offense for the team, a team warning is reported. Since the infraction occurs while in player control, the offending team retains possession and is awarded a throw-in at one of the four designated spots in either the frontcourt or backcourt, depending on the location of the warning.

### *In the Act of Shooting*

If a shooter simulates being fouled—typically by falling to the floor without contact—after releasing the ball, the faking signal (#15) should be displayed immediately; however, the whistle should be withheld. Play should be stopped upon the occurrence of any of the following:

- The try is successful;
- The defensive team gains control of the ball;
- The offensive team secures a rebound but does not immediately attempt to score;
- A dead ball situation occurs for any other reason.

### *While on Defense*

If a defensive player simulates being fouled (e.g., by falling to the floor without contact), the faking signal (#15) should be displayed immediately, with no whistle sounded. Play should be stopped under the same conditions listed above for shooters.

## Conclusion

When correctly and consistently applied, Rule 4-49 serves as an effective deterrent. Proper adjudication ensures that players, coaches, and spectators clearly understand how violations will be addressed and reinforces the importance of integrity in game play.

## 2025-2026 Rule Changes

### CHANGE TO NFHS RULE

#### **1. Definition of basket interference (Rule 4-6-1a & b (NEW)):**

This rule clarifies and expands the definition of basket interference. It now includes situations in which a player slaps or strikes the backboard, causing the backboard or basket to vibrate while the ball is on or within the basket, touching the backboard, or within the cylinder.

This clarification helps officials consistently identify interference that affects scoring plays and ensures the integrity of the basket area during shot attempts.

#### **2. Removal of Offensive Goaltending (Rules 4-22-1 & 2):**

The change eliminates the possibility of an offensive goaltending violation, which simplifies the rule for officials and players. It removes the need to judge whether a ball in flight is a try or a pass, resulting in clearer enforcement, greater consistency, and more opportunities for scoring plays near the basket.

#### **3. Backboard Contact and Downward Flight (Rule 4-22-3 (NEW)):**

This rule establishes that once the ball contacts the backboard, it is automatically considered to be on its downward flight. Therefore, if a player touches the ball after it hits the backboard, and the ball has a possibility of entering the basket, it is ruled as goaltending.

This change enhances officiating clarity and protects legitimate shot attempts. It also addresses a common misconception among coaches and players by explicitly defining goaltending, leading to more consistent enforcement.

#### **4. Definition of a Player (Rule 4-34-1):**

The definition of a player has been updated to clarify that a player is one of the five team members legally on the court at any given time, except during time-outs or intermissions. The change ensures consistency in rule enforcement by recognizing that it is difficult to distinguish between players, substitutes, and bench personnel during time-outs and intermissions. This clarification also supports the accountability of coaches for all team conduct during these periods and helps avoid misapplication of penalties such as technical fouls.

#### **5. Throw-in Spot Determination (Rule 7-5-4):**

This rule change updates the procedure for determining the designated throw-in spot following a stoppage of play (not due to the ball going out of bounds) in the frontcourt and backcourt. Instead of relying on an imaginary line, officials now use existing court markings, specifically the three-point line, to determine the location. This change improves accuracy, consistency, and clarity for officials by using visible floor markings rather than imaginary lines, which were often misjudged.

## **6. Unfair advantage through deceptive re-entry tactics (Rule 9-2-12 & 9-3-4 (NEW)):**

This rule change addresses situations where a thrower purposely and/or deceitfully delays returning inbounds after legally stepping out of bounds and then becomes the first player to touch the ball upon re-entering the court.

This change lessens the penalty for players who delay their return after being out of bounds, shifting the penalty from a technical foul to a less severe violation. This rule aligns with the penalty structure of similar violations, such as Rule 9-3-3 (where a player steps out of bounds on their own volition). The change is intended to make it easier for officials to recognize and penalize these actions consistently while reducing the severity of the penalty, encouraging more accurate enforcement.

## **7. Basket Interference and Technical Fouls (Rule 10-4-4b):**

This rule prohibits players from illegally contacting the backboard or ring in ways that create an unfair advantage or interfere with a scoring attempt. This rule is designed to maintain fair play and protect the integrity of scoring opportunities by penalizing actions affecting the outcome of a shot, with a technical foul.

The rule change aims to standardize and clarify the enforcement of basket interference, leading to fairer outcomes and more consistent officiating. The removal of subjective judgments around intent allows for clearer rulings and better alignment with current game dynamics.

## SYC Basketball Age Group Rules & Guidelines

**ZONE DEFENSE:** Zone defenses will only be allowed in the 6th grade and older leagues.

It is the philosophy of SYC Basketball to promote and encourage the teaching of man-to-man defense and offense in the younger age groups. Therefore, the use of zone defense in the 3rd-5th grade Rec leagues is prohibited. Referees will issue one warning regarding zone play, and then each subsequent violation shall result in the assessment of a technical foul on the offending team. NOTE: One player's violation of the man-to-man rule may constitute a violation of this rule; it does not have to be the entire team. Accordingly, one player standing in the lane playing the ball, rather than his or her man, constitutes a violation of this rule just as much as a zone played by all five players.

**BACK-COURT OR PRESSING DEFENSE:** Back-court defense is not permitted in leagues 5th grade and younger.

In these leagues, guarding in the back court is not allowed by the defensive team after a change of possession and the offensive team has gained control of the ball in their back court. Change of possession may occur following a rebound or a turnover. Change of possession and control shall be determined by the referees and will occur when an offensive player clearly possesses and controls the ball after the rebound or turnover. All defensive players must retreat to the offensive team's front court after the offensive team has gained control of the ball in their back court. In addition, on an inbound pass in the back court, all defensive players must retreat to the front court prior to the ball being inbounded and no defense will be allowed until the offensive team advances the ball across the half court line.

Whenever guarding in the back court is not allowed, the following rules apply:

- After a change of possession and the offensive team has gained control of the ball in their back court, all defensive players must retreat to the offensive team's front court.
- No defensive player in the offensive team's back court will interfere with nor actively play the ball and/or offensive player.
- If the offensive team is dribbling the ball from their back court to their front court, the defensive team must allow the offensive dribbler to obtain uncontested front court status before engaging the offensive player with the ball. The defensive player must be an arm's length away from the offensive player with the ball at the time the offensive player with the ball establishes front court status.

In leagues for 6th grade and older, pressing defenses of any form, including full court presses, are allowed, so long as the pressing team is not leading by 15 points or more. Once a team obtains a lead of 15 points or more, that team may not press. 4th and 5th grade leagues are permitted to use a man- to-man press (the prohibition against zones and double teams remains) in

the back court only in the last 2 minutes of the game. Zone or trapping presses are prohibited at these younger age groups. No back-court defense or zone of any kind, at any time, is allowed in the 3rd grade program.

### **MAN-TO-MAN DEFENSE**

Each defensive player must guard a different offensive player. The distance between the defensive guarding player and the offensive guarded player will be dependent on whether the guarded player has the ball or not and the position of the guarded player to the ball, as well as the guarded player's position on the floor. The defensive player must move with the man he or she is guarding, rather than simply occupying an area of the court. If a player does not move with his or her man, this constitutes a violation of the prohibition against zone defenses in the 5th grade and younger leagues.

### **DOUBLE TEAMING**

Double-teaming occurs when two defensive players guard the same offensive player, whether he or she has the ball or not. In the 3rd-5th grade leagues, double-teaming is only permitted in the free-throw lane on a player with the ball. In the 6th-12th grade leagues, double-teaming is permitted at any time.

### **SPREAD OFFENSES**

Spread offenses and clear-outs designed to isolate an offensive player to take advantage of man-to-man defenses are prohibited in the 5th grade and under leagues.

### **SWITCHING OR HELP DEFENSE**

Defensive players may switch in the event of a screen or a pick. Furthermore, a player may leave the player he or she is guarding to switch to or help on a player with the ball who has beaten the player who was guarding him or her.

### **GAME TIME LIMIT**

All leagues will use a "running clock" -- clock stops only on foul shots and time outs except for the last two (2) minutes of the game when the clock stops on all fouls, timeouts and other "dead ball" situations. Time limit between scheduled games shall be at least five minutes. Playing time limits for all leagues grades 3 through 12 shall be:

- 10-minute quarters
- Time between quarters: 1 minute
- Time between halves: 3 minutes

### **TIME OUTS**

Each team is allowed two 30-second timeouts per half. These timeouts are non-cumulative; if not used in the first half, the first half time-outs do NOT carry over to the second half.

### **OVERTIME**

Games tied at the end of regulation play shall be continued in overtime for 3-minute periods, with one additional time out per team. Successive overtime periods shall be played until a team has won. The game clock stops at all dead ball situations during overtime.

## **BASKET HEIGHT**

- Basket height for the 1st-3rd grade programs will be eight (8) feet. • Basket height for the 4th and 5th grade leagues will be nine (9) feet.
- All other age groups will play with a 10-foot basket.

Free throws for all leagues 4th grade and younger will be taken from 12 feet, or 3 feet inside the regulation free throw line. 5th grade and older will shoot free throws from the regulation line.

## **GAME SCHEDULES, LOCATIONS & POSTPONEMENTS**

The SYC Basketball Commissioner or Rec Deputy Commissioner must approve all game schedules and locations of play. Games will normally be played at schools in the Springfield/South County area. Gym allocation is controlled by Fairfax County's Neighborhood and Community Services, and SYC has very little flexibility in the selection of the schools we are assigned.

Games or practices may be postponed when the school facilities are closed because of inclement weather or when school functions conflict with SYC use of the facilities. In the event of questionable weather, call the Fairfax County Inclement Weather Hotline at 703-324-5264 or monitor the Fairfax County Public Schools website at fcps.edu. As soon as SYC officials have information on school closures, League Directors and coaches will be notified, the SYC website will be updated, and an email will be sent to all basketball families if circumstances permit. If no announcement is made, SYC basketball will go forward as scheduled.

## **FOOD AND BEVERAGES**

Fairfax County regulations prohibit food or beverages, other than water, from being brought into or consumed in school facilities. This prohibition includes sports drinks such as Gatorade, Powerade, etc. Violations may result in SYC losing access to school facilities. Please help us in maintaining a good relationship with the schools by complying with these rules and keeping the gyms clean.

## **FORFEITURES:**

A game shall be declared forfeited when:

- A team is not ready to play within five minutes after a scheduled start time. Teams must have four players to start a game and three players to continue a game once it has started.
- A team plays an ineligible player.
- A team fails to comply with the player participation rule.
- A team receives three technical fouls in any one game (not counting those for illegal defense).

## **SUSPENSIONS**

Any player or coach who is ordered out of a game by a referee for misconduct is automatically suspended and is ineligible to play the next game.

Any player, coach, or spectator hitting, shoving, or causing verbal abuse to another player, referee, coach, or spectator shall be suspended for the remainder of the season and may be banned from attending future SYC activities.

## **PROTESTS**

A coach may protest the eligibility of a player or the participation rule only.

Protests must be written and filed with the League Director and SYC Basketball Commissioner within forty-eight hours after the completion of the game being protested.

## **PLAYER PARTICIPATION**

Each player shall play a minimum of two uninterrupted quarters in each game (i.e., he or she must start, play through, and complete two different quarters). Each player on teams with 7 or more players must sit out 1 full, uninterrupted quarter. Free substitutions will be allowed only in the fourth quarter, and are encouraged to provide more equitable playing time. At no time may substitutions violate the participation rule (for example, any player in the fourth quarter who is playing his second full quarter cannot be substituted for except in case of illness/injury or disqualification).

- **Each player shall play at least TWO FULL, UNINTERRUPTED QUARTERS.**
- **Each player shall sit out at least ONE FULL, UNINTERRUPTED QUARTER.**
- For teams with only six players present after the start of the second quarter, the requirement that each player sit out one full quarter does not apply, as it is not possible to meet this requirement with six players. Instead, the rule is modified such that four players must sit out for 5 consecutive minutes of one quarter, one player sits out 5 consecutive minutes of two separate quarters, and one player sits out one full quarter. The result is that four players play 3 1/2 quarters and two players play 3 quarters of playing time.
- A player replacing an injured or disqualified player is considered to have played in that quarter if they play for more than two minutes. This counts toward the three-quarter maximum, but that player must still play two other full, uninterrupted quarters.
- If the player replacing the injured/disqualified player plays two minutes or less, that time does not count as a quarter played. If the injured/ disqualified player cannot return, the coach may substitute a different player every two minutes for the remainder of the quarter and it will not count as a quarter played for any of those players.
- Substitutions are permitted only during the break between quarters or at the stoppage of play during the 4th quarter (except for those substitutions required due to illness/injury or player disqualification). Substitutions are not allowed for any player who has not yet completed two full quarters unless that player is sick, has been injured, has been disqualified

due to fouls, or poses a safety threat to other players on the court.

*It's not the officials' responsibility to track player participation, but officials will need to help enforce the rule by not allowing substitutions during a quarter, until the 4th quarter.*

No additional expansion of the participation rule is allowed. Coaches may reduce or eliminate playing time for disciplinary reasons including chronic missing of practice, but only with the prior notification and concurrence of the League Director. Failure to receive prior approval will be considered a violation of the participation rule.

# Instructions for Timekeepers and Scorekeepers

## GAME ROUTINE FOR TIMEKEEPERS

- Consult Officials as to signals used to indicate a time out and resumption of time.
- Keep eyes on the officials throughout the game,
- Check on the duration of time outs, substitutions, time of periods, etc.
- Check on duration of time between periods. Notify teams, officials and scorers the required number of minutes before the start of each half.
- It is strongly recommended that the operator of the official clock be an adult.

## WHEN TO START THE CLOCK

- When ball is legally tapped on all jump balls.
- When ball is touched in bounds, if resumption of play is by a throw-in after clock has been stopped.
- When ball is legally touched after a missed free throw and ball is to remain live.
- Be aware that in SYC Rec games, clock is running except on time outs, shooting fouls and during last two minutes of game and during overtime, when clock stops on all dead ball situations.

## WHEN TO STOP THE CLOCK

- When time expires at the end of a period.
- When an official signals a shooting foul. (Clock stops on non-shooting fouls only during the last two minutes of game.)
- When an official grants a time out.
- When an official stops play for injury, equipment repair, or other emergency.
- During the last two minutes of the game, the clock will stop on every dead ball (i.e., whenever an official blows the whistle to stop play for foul, violation, out-of-bounds, etc.
- When a violation occurs. (Last 2 minutes of game only.)
- When an official orders time out.
- To avoid unusual delay.
- To repair or adjust equipment.
- For an injury or other emergency.
- Upon request of a player whose team has player control or when ball is dead.

## GAME ROUTINE FOR SCOREKEEPERS

- Scorekeepers should be adults.
- Seek designation from Referee as to who is the official scorer, and which is official scorebook and consult with him as to signals used to designate fouls and time outs.
- Obtain names and numbers of all players who may participate in the game at least ten (10) minutes before the start of the game. At least three (3) minutes before scheduled starting time have each team designate its five starting players.
- Record field goals made, free throws made, running summary of points scored, personal and technical fouls on each player, team personal fouls per half, time outs and held ball possession. Score keeper is NOT required to keep individual player point totals; game score is priority
- Designate each goal and each foul in the manner provided in the scorebook. Any questions regarding the format of the scorebook should be discussed and resolved with the game referees prior to the game.
- Notify official (a) when team has taken the legal time outs, (b) when a player has five personal fouls, (c) after a team has been charged with five personal fouls in a quarter, and (d) when a team has used time outs in excess of the legal number. In (b), (c) and (d), if play is in progress at time of discovery, withhold whistle until ball is dead or in control of offending team. Scorekeeper must also advise referee of who is entitled to possession in alternating possession held ball situations.
- Check with clock/scoreboard operator regarding display of score, bonus situation, possession arrow, etc. If any discrepancy occurs, notify referee for resolution once next dead ball situation occurs.
- Blow horn to stop game only when ball is dead.
- When a substitute reports (must be ready and entitled to enter game) signal when ball is dead and before change of status of ball is about to occur. Allow substitute to go on court only when referee beckons. Do not signal after ball has been placed at the disposal of a free thrower; if ball is dead after a free throw attempt, a substitution may be made. If a thrower is to be replaced, be sure that it is legal for another player to attempt that throw. A substitute cannot replace a player designated to jump or designated to attempt a free throw; he/she must wait until the next dead ball, time out situation.
- Scorebook is official score.