

Mid-Season Review

(By David Ames, Bd. III ME)

No matter how many years one has been officiating basketball, there is always a need to review and freshen up on the rules. Rule changes, points of emphasis and our own forgetfulness require us to stay in tune with what is happening. We can never assume that it is easy or there is no room for improvement. Following is a review of some important areas that we face daily in our quest for that “perfect game.”

Delay Warnings

There are three delay warnings that we must understand and be able to manage properly. First is when two or more players huddle in the lane once the official is ready to administer the free throw. Also included with this is contact with the free thrower that may cause a delay. Hopefully the new lane alignment will somewhat alleviate this problem. Second is when the defense breaks the boundary plane line on a throw-in. A reminder here is that hitting the ball out of the thrower-in’s hand is a technical foul and also constitutes the warning. The third warning is interference with the ball after a goal.

Regarding the boundary plane warning, we should be aware that if this occurs in the last 5 seconds of the game, it should be ignored unless it interferes with the throw-in. If it does interfere with the throw-in then an immediate technical should be called. Otherwise an advantage could be created for the defense by stopping the clock to issue the warning.

Player Uniforms and Appearance

A continual problem in games today is the issue of players’ uniforms not being tucked in. Shirts must be in and pants are to be worn above the hips. The combination of sleek, slippery uniform material plus players constantly blousing their shirts causes an issue of shirts being out much of the time. We should realize that this is going to occur, but it’s when players make no attempt to tuck the shirts in is when we have to intervene. We should not have to ask them to tuck the shirts in. Their coach has already con-

Remember, accidental touching is not interference; i.e., ball bouncing off a player’s head or shoulder. Some important points are: these are team warnings, one warning per team, per game per category is issued, the warning is reported to the scorer and affected coach, and a second warning in any category results in a technical foul.

firmed in the pregame conference that uniforms will be worn correctly. A player who makes no attempt to rectify the problem must be asked to leave the game and may not reenter until the next opportunity to substitute. Players are also required to have their shirts tucked in during warmup and as bench personnel. ***The “Dennis Rodman Syndrome” has taken over in recent years. Where once a player is disqualified, the first thing they do is pull their shirts out. We need to politely remind the player in this situation that the shirt goes back in, and we should stay by them until it is done.*** Substitutes wishing to enter the game should not be allowed entry if they appear at the scorer’s table with their shirts out. Another appearance type issue is that of long hair. We must address players that have unusually long hair worn in braids, pony tails or free-flowing. This could be a real distraction and hindrance to opposing players and should be addressed during warmup by conscientious officials.

Basket Interference and Goaltending

These two violations often require our judgment and quick reaction, especially in the higher skilled games. First of all, definition knowledge is important for us to properly rule on these situations. We must know what constitutes the basket and the cylinder. The uneducated viewer calls most everything goaltending, but we know that a predominance of calls involve basket interference. Some important reminders are that basket interference occurs when a *live* ball is touched when it is on or within the basket. Also, if a *live* ball is touched when it is in contact with the cylinder then a basket interference violation has occurred. ***Two less common aspects of basket interference but ones that we must be familiar with are reaching through the basket from below and contacting the ball while it is outside the cylinder, and the new ruling of snapping the ring down and having it contact the ball before the ring has returned to its original position.*** Both of these constitute basket interference and must be penalized. Basket interference can be committed by either the offense or defense and results in either awarding or canceling of a score. Whereas goaltending occurs only on a try or tap for goal, when the ball is touched on its downward flight, above the level of the ring, outside the cylinder and has a chance of entering the basket. The ball hitting the backboard has no particular significance in this ruling. The ball can be pinned against the board or be contacted after it has hit the backboard, since it still may be on its upward flight. Goaltending can also be committed by either the offense or defense. We must remember that these restrictions only apply on a try or tap, therefore intercepting a pass under these situations is not goaltending.

Injured Players and Blood

The new blood ruling requires us to sharpen our knowledge of situations involving bleeding or injured players. If a player is not ready to play immediately or if a coach or team attendant comes onto the floor, then the player must either be removed from the game or that team must take a timeout in order for the player to remain in the game. ***If players from both teams are involved, then each team must take a timeout for their player to be able to remain in the game.*** A 30- or 60-second timeout could be used in these situations depending on the time needed to ready the player for return. Remember, when situations involve blood on a uniform, we do everything possible to get the player back into the game, even to the extent of allowing them to change numbers without a penalty.

Over and Back Exceptions

The over and back rule challenges us periodically and is frequently misunderstood by the fans. The three exceptions to this rule are vital for us to review and retain. First, as a result of a jump ball, an airborne player who catches the tap is allowed to land with one or both feet in backcourt. Next the player who receives a throw-in while airborne, may land with one or both feet in backcourt. Last, an airborne player intercepting a pass, having left from his/her frontcourt, may land with one or both feet in backcourt. Important keys in these rulings are that the player receiving the ball is airborne, with both feet off the floor, and that they return to the floor in a normal landing with no particular foot sequence. ***A player landing on one foot in front court and then stepping into back court after some delay is not a normal landing and would not meet the exception.***