

THIRD BASKETBALL MEMO

JANUARY 28, 2010

This has to go down as one of the most unusual winters in Iowa basketball history, to say the least. Snow, fog, ice, white-outs, you name it we've had it, but we will all survive and make the best of what we have to work with.

COACHES & OFFICIALS: We need to make a better effort pertaining to the **bench decorum rule**. We have coaches who are up when the clock is not running and wanting to visit with officials rather than coaching. **This should not take place.** Coaches, if you want to ask a question of the official when the clock is not running, you need to be seated when doing so. Officials, if a coach is up and wants to visit, indicate to the coach he must be seated and back up and listen. Coaches and officials need to understand this is the coaches warning, any subsequent violations of the bench decorum rule are subject to being assessed a technical foul for violation of the bench decorum rule. Official should respond to the coaches' question by rule, if the question concerns judgment, judgment is judgment and we can agree to disagree, but understand that is something officials aren't going to visit about. We all see plays from different angles, and some times they just don't look the same, but that doesn't mean one individual is more right than the other, but the officials decision is made from what he/she saw from their angle.

BENCH DECORUM RULE: A coach is allowed to stand and confer with a player(s) whenever the clock is NOT running. Communication shall be done in a positive manner and shall take place **directly in front** of where the coach was seated. When the clock starts following a throw-in or last missed free throw, the coach shall immediately return to his/her seat. The officials will not delay a throw-in administration to permit a coach additional dead clock time to visit with player(s). Coaches and officials must understand communication is to be kept to a minimum. Coaches are **NOT** to be up when the clock is not running to visit with officials. Coach, the opportunity for you to stand up and coach when the clock is not running is an opportunity to "COACH." Please do not misuse this privilege by using this opportunity to communicate with officials.

The bench decorum rule allows coaches additional opportunities to stand-up and instruct players while the clock is **NOT** running during the game. Coaches are **not** to stand and show displeasure regarding any situation they may not approve of. This unsportsmanlike behavior is subject to a technical foul being called. This bench decorum rule does allow coaches an opportunity to coach and teach whenever the clock is NOT running. **The phone calls I receive concerning the bench decorum rule are coaches who are abiding by the rule and upset that their fellow coach is not abiding by the bench decorum rule or the officials are not enforcing the bench decorum rule.**

DISQUALIFIED PLAYER: Upon the head coaches notification of a disqualified player, the coach may stand to congratulate the disqualified player and may walk the confines of his/her bench to select a replacement for the disqualified player.

OFFICIALS MECHANICS: In watching several games last week, I think we are losing track of our NFHS mechanics. If we have a violation, out-of-bounds or time-out request we should have a whistle, (use signal 2) open hand above the head, elbow at the ear, clock stopping mechanic. If we have a foul, do not point at the person committing the foul (bird dog only if needed), (use signal 4) closed fist above the head, elbow at the ear, clock stopping mechanic.

Out-of-bounds mechanic (signal 2) should be followed by pointing the direction we are going, just like a player control foul (signal 4) should be followed by hand behind the head (signal 34). When we administer a throw-in, have hand above head and chop the ball in after it has been touched by a player

on the court other than the thrower-in. Bottom line, don't short change the NFHS mechanics. The use of unauthorized signals frequently confuses coaches and spectators because the meaning is unknown. This was a point of emphasis this year with the National Federation and the IHSAA & IGHSAA.

Officials, make sure you are moving to obtain the best look between offensive and defensive players. Players are constantly moving, so angles are constantly changing therefore officials can not come down and park in one spot.

I still see a number of officials who are ball watchers. Learn that when you have primary coverage and when you have secondary coverage, to **trust your partners!!** If the play ends up in a gray area (area where two officials may be looking) and something takes place, give the primary official the opportunity to make a call, but if he/she passes and you saw a violation or foul get it. Don't tell the coach that's not my primary, to me you're saying you saw the foul or violation, but it's not my call.

Officials, when you report numbers to the bench, make sure you only use one hand.

Lead official needs to be ball-side and know your primary coverage and secondary coverage and not be ball watching.

Center official, when the ball is in your primary coverage work to establish and maintain a position between the offensive and defensive player(s), movement is necessary to maintain good coverage. If a shot is taken, move toward the end-line, officiate the rebounding below the free-throw line extended and stay there until the ball has been rebounded or a made basket and the throw –in has been made, then look for the next closest competitive match-up on the floor. You will help the trail if a press is on and then officiate ahead of the ball into the front-court. I see too many centers bail when the shot goes up and that leaves the lead (to become trail official), officiating additional players he/she should not have to be officiating.

Trail official, when the ball is inside the top of the circle in the front court, you should be at approximately the 28 foot mark which is just above the top of the free-throw circle in the front court. Assist the lead on travel calls and understand your primary and secondary coverage. Make sure when the ball is in your primary you work to maintain good angles, remember if a shot is taken from behind the three point arc you should use signal 16 and officiate the shooter back to the floor. Lead official in this situation should not even be looking or signaling 3-point field goal.

PHILOSOPHY OF FOUL CALLING AND ROUGH PLAY:

When the offensive player's rhythm, speed, balance or quickness is interrupted due to contact with a defensive player who is not in a legal guarding position, a foul should be called on the defense. When calling a foul on the defense, ask yourself, "what did he/she do wrong?" If you can answer this question, odds are you will get the call correct. Remember, the defense is entitled to any position they get to legally on the playing floor.

Get the First Foul: If you don't get the first foul (especially in the post area) and the player retaliates, the thought process often becomes, now I can't penalize the second foul, because I didn't penalize the first foul. Now your hope is that they play through all this and your nightmare begins. This is an easy way to lose control of a game.

Bottom line, your first quarter is one of your most important quarters in establishing control and what you are going to allow. Your third quarter may prove to be just like your first quarter if the teams aren't in any foul trouble at half-time.

Be consistent at both ends of the floor and don't get caught up in momentum swings!!

POST PLAY: The key word is **displacement**. If a player is displaced, it is a foul! Offensive players creating space by “backing down” a defender, or a defender moving an offensive player off his or her spot on the floor are examples of post play fouls that must be called.

Trail and center movement allows the lead to watch players’ off-ball, the critical component in combating physical play. When the trail moves off the sideline to cover plays, the lead can focus on the lane area, where most rough play occurs. Lead movement is critical to watching low-post action. It’s paramount to game control. Game control starts with post play and works its way to the perimeter.

HAND CHECKING: Defenders are not permitted to have hand(s) on the dribbler or offensive players away from the ball. Hand checking is not incidental contact it gives a tremendous advantage to the person using illegal hands or body to push off in order to create a more favorable position for the defender who has committed a foul. Regardless of where it happens on the floor.

When a player:

- Continuously places a hand on the opposing player-- it is a foul.
- Places both hands on a player—it is a foul.
- Continuously jabs a hand or forearm on an opponent—it is a foul.

BLOCK/CHARGE: With three person officiating mechanics being utilized at the varsity level by most schools, we need to do a better job of officiating the block/charge. It is important to understand primary coverage and **read the defense** so we know who created the contact. There will be situations when the contact is not a foul, but the defense is attempting to bait the official into calling a foul, that is where the warning comes into play. When a player takes the ball to the basket and there is a collision or a player is displaced we should have a player control foul, a blocking foul or if a player bails on you, a warning should be issued to the player who bailed. Coaches should always be notified when the earliest opportunity presents itself, if a player warning has been issued for an attempt to draw a foul call. This will help you the official in two ways; it will give the coach an opportunity to tell his player not to do this anymore and also send a message to the coach that you are not going to tolerate this type of action or behavior tonight. If a warning has been issued for faking falling, a second offense by the same team would result in a technical foul being called on the player who fakes the fall the second time.

Always remember once the defensive player has established a legal guarding position (two feet on the floor facing their opponent) the defensive player can move backwards or laterally and maintain a legal guarding position. The key now is “who created the contact,” offense or defense.

REBOUNDING: Always understand a player has a right to any spot on the floor he/she gets to legally. Once a player has established a position legally on the floor, he/she is entitled to that space from floor to ceiling. It is vital when officiating rebounding you achieve a position you can see between the two players to be able to determine if a player gained an advantage or not. Position is the key, because angles can be deceiving. If two players are attempting to rebound side by side more than likely there will be some contact because they are side by side.

Do not penalize a taller player or a good leaper because they may have reached over the top of his/her opponent to retrieve a rebound and gained no advantage. If either player gains an advantage through contact, a foul should be called. Sometimes we penalize the player from behind, when the contact is initiated by the player in front, because the player in front had to jump back because the ball went over their head. Do not penalize an individual who is jumping straight up and down, they are entitled to occupy this space from floor to ceiling if they established this space legally. Key for a center official is don’t bail until the rebound has been secured and the first outlet pass has been made. Trail and center officials must close down on rebounding action because ignoring it and backing away leads to increased physical play and too much action for the lead alone to cover.

SCREENING: A screen is legal action by a player who, without causing contact, delays or prevents an opponent from reaching a desired position.

To establish a legal screening position:

- **The screener may face any direction**
- **Time and distance are relevant**
- **The screener must be stationary, except when both are moving in the same path and the same direction**
- **When screening a stationary opponent from the front or side, the screener may be anywhere short of contact**
- **When screening a stationary opponent from behind, the screener must allow the opponent one normal step backward without contact**
- **When screening a moving opponent, the screener must allow the opponent time and distance to avoid contact. The distance need not be more than two strides**
- **When screening an opponent who is moving in the same path and direction as the screener is moving, the opponent is responsible for contact if the screener slows up or stops.**

OFFICIALS: Make sure you are entering your sportsmanship ratings (varsity games only) as the season goes along. Final sportsmanship ratings shall be submitted on-line by March 15, 2010, in order to be tournament eligible for the 2011 tournament play.

COACHES & OFFICIALS: The work you perform is not only a reflection of yourself, but every coach and official. People will judge coaches and officials by what you do and how you act and react. You must be willing to accept that responsibility. Each game deserves your maximum effort. No matter what level of play you coach or officiate, no matter what the score may be, or the time remaining in the game, you must have a dedicated purpose. Professionalism is one aspect of being prepared mentally. Coaches and officials must always remember that they are in the public eye both on and off the court. You are recognized for what you do, but remember you are accountable for who you are.

OFFICIALS, DO WHAT'S RIGHT, REGARDLESS IF IT AFFECTS THE HOME OR VISITING TEAM. If you do this, we will never have to defend yourself!!

The season is winding down and tournament play is just around the corner. Officials work on your mechanics and clean up the rough play if the above letter pertained to you. Coaches, if the bench decorum rule is something you need to work on, do so, so it doesn't play a role on your integrity. Lets all work together for the best interest of the game.

Sincerely,
Roger Barr
IHSAA