

Basketball Points of Emphasis - 2021-22

By NFHS on May 18, 2021

[basketball](#)

OFFICIATING MECHANICS AND SIGNALS

The NFHS Rules Committee expects officials to adhere to the approved mechanics and signals. By using only approved mechanics and signals it adds to the professional image of the officials and shows greater respect for the game. Officials at the High School level are part of an education-based activity and the use of proper mechanics and the avoidance of “personal style” is essential.

The reason for having signals is to communicate to players, coaches, table personnel, fans, and other officials on the floor. The use of approved signals leads to more clear communication between all those involved. To that end, for each ruling the proper sequence of signals is:

- Stop the clock using the proper signal for a violation or foul.
- Signal held ball or the type of foul or violation.
- Verbally state the jersey color of the team entitled to the ball for the ensuing throw-in and point in the direction of that team's basket.
- Indicate the throw-in location.

Note: Due to the change in the approved signal used for player/team control foul, the “punch signal” has been eliminated.

TIME-OUT ADMINISTRATION

During a “dead” ball, EITHER team may be granted a time out. During a live ball, only the team in control of the ball may be granted a timeout. It is important officials verify there is PLAYER control prior to granting the request.

- **Head Coach requesting:** Coaches must understand that just because they have requested a timeout does not guarantee it will be granted. Remember, only the head coach or a player of the team in control of the ball may legally request a timeout. Officials must be sure the head coach is making the request. This request may be oral or visual.
- **Player control.** The committee is still concerned that officials are granting timeouts while the ball is loose and not in player control. Over the years, an officiating philosophy has developed that teaches officials to grant loose ball timeouts quickly to avoid rough play and stop additional players from diving onto the loose ball pile. While preventing rough play is desirable, that concept cannot supersede the basic rule that a player must be in control of the ball for a timeout to be legally granted. When in doubt, do not grant the timeout. Additionally, do not hesitate to charge fouls for players “jumping on” another player. “Going for the ball” does not justify this rough play.
- **Granting Timeout Requests:** Ideally, granting the timeout should be the primary coverage official. However, other official(s) may become aware that a timeout is being requested. In all cases, officials must be certain there is player control prior to granting the timeout request. Officials should also be aware of situations where timeouts are more likely to be requested e.g. end of the period/ game or a team has made several baskets in a row.

UNSPORTING CONDUCT

Unsporting conduct. The committee is concerned about inappropriate conduct by players, bench personnel, coaches, officials, and spectators. Each group needs to view the activity in light of it being educationally based and not accept conduct that would not be tolerated in other educational settings. Therefore, each group has the responsibility to demonstrate civility and citizenship.

To this effect:

- Game management needs to pay particular attention to spectators. Game Management should intervene when spectator behavior becomes unacceptable. This should be done prior to an official having to make such a request.
- When game management fails to address spectator behavior on their own, officials should remind game management to hold spectators accountable for their actions. A game ticket is not a license to abuse.
- Officials should not tolerate inappropriate conduct from coaches and/or players. The rules allow for a “warning” to be given to coaches and it should be utilized when appropriate.
- The team huddle is not a safe haven for coaches’ bad language. Just as a classroom teacher should not verbally abuse students, neither should coaches use bad language when addressing their players.
- Players are not permitted to “let off steam” by using profanity, even if it is not directed at an opponent or official. Being angry at oneself is no excuse.
- Officials are not exempt from unsporting conduct. Inappropriate references to players, coaches or other officials is not acceptable. Inappropriate behavior before, during or after the game should be reported to the official's association /assignor.

SCREENING

Screening is a legal action to delay a player while touching the floor, without causing contact to prevent an opponent from reaching a desired position.

Legal screening is when the player who is screening an opponent:

- Is stationary (within the vertical plane) when contact occurs.
- Has both feet on the floor when contact occurs.
- Time and distance are relevant.
- The screener shall be stationary, except when both the screener and opponent are moving in the same path and the same direction.

Illegal screening is when the player who is screening an opponent:

- Is moving when contact occurred.
- Does not give sufficient distance in setting a screen outside the field of vision of a stationary opponent when contact occurred.
- Does not respect the elements of time and distance of an opponent in motion when contact occurred.
- A player may not use arms, hands, hips, or shoulders to force movement through a screen or hold the screener and then push the screener aside in order to maintain legal guarding position.

If the screen is set within the field of vision of a stationary opponent (front or lateral), the screener may establish the screen as close to the opponent as desired, provided there is no contact.

If the screen is set outside the field of vision of a stationary opponent, the screener must permit the opponent to take 1 normal step towards the screen without making contact.

If the opponent is in motion, the elements of time and distance shall apply. The screener must leave enough space so that the player who is being screened is able to avoid the screen by stopping or changing direction.

The distance required is never less than 1 and never more than 2 normal steps.

A player who is legally screened is responsible for any contact with the player who has set the screen.

EURO-STEPS, SPIN MOVES, AND JUMP STOPS – LEGAL OR ILLEGAL?

If executed within the parameters of the 4.44 traveling rule, each of these plays is legal. If not executed within the rules, each of these plays is illegal. High school players often attempt to emulate players they watch at higher levels but because collegiate and professional rules, interpretations, and directives vary, what is legal at one level may not be legal at another.

What is referred to as a Euro Step most often occurs when a player who is dribbling toward the basket stops dribbling, catches the ball while both feet are off the floor, lands on one foot and steps laterally with the other foot, often to step around a defender, all while facing the basket. The first foot to land on the floor is the pivot foot and if the player releases the ball on a try for goal or pass before the pivot foot touches the floor again, it is legal. If the player's pivot foot touches the floor a second time before the player releases the ball, it is illegal.

What is often referred to as a Spin Move most often occurs when a player who dribbles toward the basket, catches the ball while faking to one side of the basket, plants a foot (becomes the pivot foot), while facing the basket, turns his or her back to the basket in an attempt to "spin" around a defender, then steps with the other foot. This would be legal but most often when the player's back is to the basket during the spin, to again face the basket and get into position to release the ball on a try, the player must step again. This means the player's pivot foot returns to the floor a second time, thus causing a traveling violation. Example: A1 is dribbling toward the basket from the left side. Defender B1 is facing A1 when A1 catches the ball and steps with the left foot while faking to the left, then spins (back to the basket), steps with the right foot while spinning and then steps with the left foot again. When beginning the spin move, A1's left foot became the pivot foot and after the spin, when the left foot again touches the floor, A1 has violated. This type of play could originate from in front of the basket or from either side. Due to the speed of the player attempting a spin move and the physical difficulty of facing the basket when one foot touches the floor, then attempting to spin around a defender and release the ball before the pivot foot again touches the floor, the vast majority of spin move attempts are illegal.

What is often referred to as a Jump Stop is, by rule, an exception to the traveling rules. A legal jump stop occurs when a player who **catches the ball with both feet off the floor, lands on one foot, jumps off that foot and lands with both feet touching the floor simultaneously**. Many players are taught well and successfully execute legal jump stops. There are two situations that most often cause attempts at legal jump stops to become illegal. The first: After the player jumps off one foot, the player lands on one foot followed by the other (illegal "stutter step"), instead of landing simultaneously on both feet (legal). The second: After the player completes a legal jump stop, the player pivots. A legal jump stop is already an exception to the travel rule and a player who pivots with either foot after a jump stop is completed gains a huge advantage and has committed a traveling violation.

Landing on both feet, under NFHS rules the player violates when his or her pivot foot touches the floor the second time.

We encourage players, coaches, and officials to study and learn the rules governing these exciting basketball plays as they relate to NFHS rules.

TRAVELING - BASIC FUNDAMENTALS

When beginning a dribble, a player must release the ball before lifting his or her pivot foot. A player who lifts the pivot foot before releasing the ball to begin a dribble has committed a traveling violation.

It is always legal for a player to lift the pivot foot but the player must pass, shoot, or be granted a time-out before the pivot foot touches the floor again.

It is not possible for a player to travel while dribbling the ball, bouncing the ball while out-of-bounds during a throw-in or prior to attempting free throw(s).

For officials, identifying a player's pivot foot is, by far, the most important aspect of accurately ruling potential traveling violations. Videos, traveling presentations, and practice are effective tools available to officials who want to improve their accuracy of ruling potential traveling plays.

Traveling rules are relatively easy to learn and understand but because of the sheer number of potential traveling violations that occur in every game and the speed at which many of these plays occur, making a high percentage of accurate rulings is difficult. In some instances, officials appear to rule on these plays based on what it "looks like," rather than what rules allow. To improve the teaching, execution, and accurate rulings of potential traveling situations, players, coaches, and officials should review relevant rule descriptions and take advantage of available information ... and practice!