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**Interpretation and practical application
of the Official Basketball Rules 2000
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The aim of this document is to point out some specific practical situations as they might arise in a normal basketball game.

The study of these situations can lead to a better understanding of the spirit and intention of the rules for all those involved in the game of basketball.

As far as the interpretation of the charged time-out and substitution is concerned, the officials and table officials should try to apply the spirit of the rules, as the intent of these rules allows some tolerance in requesting charged time-outs or substitutions.

For the sake of consistency throughout this document "team A" is the offensive team and "team B" is the defensive team.

1. Art. 10 Timekeeper: Duties

Situation:

A4 scores a field goal with 2:02 minutes remaining in the 4th period. After the basket, the ball rolls away from the court consuming 4 seconds of playing time. Shall the timekeeper stop the game clock at 2:00 minutes before the end of the period?

Interpretation:

No. The game clock is stopped only after a valid field goal scored during the last 2:00 minutes of the game.

2. Art. 11 24-second operator: Duties

Situation 1:

The official calls a violation against B4 for deliberately kicking the ball with his foot but forgets the "twenty-four second reset" signal.

Is the 24-second operator permitted to reset and restart the 24-second device on his own?

Interpretation:

No. In such situations a new 24-second period can only be given with the conventional signal from the official.

If the obvious 'intentional foot ball' violation is called by the official and it is not followed by the 'twenty-four second reset' signal, the 24-second operator is strongly advised to immediately attract the attention of the official in order to clarify the situation.

Situation 2:

Team A has the ball when the official stops the game for a valid reason connected with team B (B4 has lost a contact lens, B5 is injured, etc.).

Is the official obliged to signal to the scorer's table that a new 24-second period is to be restarted?

Interpretation:

No. In all situations where an official has stopped the game because of an action connected with the opposing team in control of the ball, the 24-second operator shall reset the 24-second device without expecting the appropriate signal from the official.

3. Art. 25 Goal: When made and its value

Situation 1:

Whilst in the act of shooting, there is physical contact between shooter A4 and B4. The ball enters the basket. The lead official calls a charging foul against A4 and therefore the basket should not count. The trail official calls a defensive foul against B4 and therefore the basket should count.

Interpretation:

Double foul and the basket does not count. The game shall be resumed with a throw-in from the free-throw line extended by team A.

Situation 2:

After a shot for a field goal by A4, the ball is touched on its downward flight above the ring by A5 and B5 simultaneously and,

- a) the ball enters the basket.
- b) the ball does not enter the basket.

Interpretation:

No points can be awarded in either situation. The game shall be resumed with a jump ball between any two opposing players.

Remember:

Whenever there are contradictory decisions of the officials or simultaneous infractions of the rules and one of the sanctions is to cancel the scored basket, that sanction prevails and **no points shall be awarded!**

Situation 3:

A4 attempts a jump shot from the three-point field goal area. B4, standing in the two-point area, attempts to block the shot on its upward flight. B4 deflects the ball and after that he fouls A4,

- a) before A4 has returned to the floor.
- b) after A4 has returned to the floor.

In both cases the ball enters the basket.

Interpretation:

- a) Two points and one additional free throw are awarded to A4.
- b1) Two points and possession of the ball for a throw-in are awarded to team A.

However, if team B is in the team foul penalty:

- b2) Two points and two additional free throws are awarded to A4.

Situation 4:

Whilst the ball is in the air on a shot for a field goal by A4, a double foul is called against A5 and B5.

1. The ball enters the basket.
2. The ball does not enter the basket.

Interpretation:

1. Two or three points are awarded to A4. The game shall be resumed with a throw-in from the end line by team B.
2. The game shall be resumed with a jump ball between A5 and B5 at the nearest circle. Neither team had control of the ball nor was entitled to the ball when the double foul was called.

4. Art. 27 Charged time-out

Art. 27.3.1: A coach or assistant coach has the right to request a charged time-out. He shall do so by going in person to the scorer and asking clearly for a time-out, making the proper conventional sign with his hands.

Situation 1:

Is the coach allowed to request a time-out directly from the team bench area instead of going in person to the scorer?

Interpretation:

Actually, this current practice is very common with the majority of coaches. In such situations the scorer shall be tolerant and sound his signal at the first time-out opportunity to inform the officials of the request.

But very often, the scorer is concentrating on the game and, not having lateral visual contact with the coach, does not always recognise that a charged time-out has been requested. In such a case, clear verbal communication between all table officials could be advantageous. Nevertheless coaches must be aware that they run the risk of not having the time-out granted if the scorer does not hear or see their signal coming from the team bench area.

Situation 2:

Whilst the ball is dead and the game clock is stopped, coach A, in his team bench area, requests a charged time-out directly from the closest official. Shall the time-out be granted?

Interpretation:

The official shall direct the coach to the scorer and wait for his signal. Should the scorer approve the coach's request for the time-out, the time-out should be granted.

5. Art. 28 Substitution

Art. 28.2.1: A substitute has the right to request a substitution. He shall do so by going in person to the scorer and asking clearly for a substitution, making the proper conventional sign with his hands. He shall sit on the substitution bench/chair until the substitution opportunity begins.

Situation 1:

During the substitution opportunity for team A, the official is about to hand the ball to the thrower-in. At that moment the substitute A10 comes from the team bench to the scorer's table requesting a substitution.

Interpretation:

As the substitution opportunity has not yet ended, the scorer shall cooperate and indicate to the officials, by immediately sounding his signal, that a request for a substitution has been made.

It would be beyond the intent of the rule to sound the signal only when the substitute has reported to the scorer in person and is seated on the substitution chair.

Situation 2:

Team A is granted a substitution. Players A10 and A11, who were seated on the substitution chairs, have already entered the playing court after a beckoning signal from the official. At that moment, four more players, two from each team, leave their team benches for the scorer's table, asking directly for substitution.

Interpretation:

As the substitution opportunity has not yet ended, the scorer shall cooperate and indicate to the officials, by immediately sounding his signal again, that a request for a substitution has been made.

It would be beyond the intent of the rule to sound the signal only when the substitute is seated on the substitution chair.

Situation 3:

During the substitution for team A the official insists that:

1. The substitutes shall enter and the players leave at the centre of the court, just in front of the scorer's table.
2. Players who are substituted shall leave the court at the same time as the substitutes enter the court.

Interpretation:

- The substitutes shall remain outside the boundary line, close to the scorer's table, until the official beckons them onto the playing court.
- Players who have been substituted do not have to report to either the scorer or the official and are permitted to leave the court at any point.

After establishing visual contact with the scorer's table and the substitute, the official may give the beckoning signal from his present position on the court. It is not necessary for him to stand in front of the scorer's table.

After his beckoning signal, the substitutes shall enter the court from a point close to the scorer's table (where they asked for substitution), however, the players may leave the court from any point.

Remember:

- Be sure that the number of players leaving the court is equal to the number of substitutes entering the court.
- Complete the substitution and restart the game as soon as possible.

Situation 4:

The substitution (or time-out) opportunity has just ended when coach A runs to the scorer's table, loudly requesting substitution (or time-out). The scorer reacts and erroneously sounds his signal. The official whistles and interrupts the game.

Interpretation:

Because of the official's whistle, the ball becomes dead and the game clock remains stopped, i. e. there is a substitution (or time-out) opportunity. But as the request was made too late, substitution (or time-out) is not granted. The game is immediately resumed.

6. Art. 38 Eight seconds

Situation:

Close to the end of his eight-second period A4 passes the ball from his backcourt to the front court. Before the eight-second period expires, the ball touches the opposing player B4 in the front court and returns to the backcourt to a team A player.

Does team A have the right to a new eight-second period?

Interpretation:

Yes. The ball is considered to be in the front court as soon as it touches the floor, a player or an official in the front court.

7. Art. 40 Ball returned to the backcourt

Situation 1:

Team A is awarded a throw-in from the sideline in his front court next to the centre line. Once the ball is in A4's hands, he makes one normal lateral step in such a way that he is now standing with both feet in his backcourt. He throws the ball to his team-mate A5 who is also in the backcourt.

Interpretation:

Violation. Despite the fact that A4's lateral move is legal, it is the initial location of the throw-in which determines where the thrower-in may pass the ball to his team-mate.

Situation 2:

Unsportsmanlike foul by B4 on A4. After the free throws, A5 has the ball in his hands for a throw-in from the centre line. He makes one normal lateral step in such a way that he is now standing with both feet in his front court. He throws the ball to his team-mate A6 who is in his backcourt.

Interpretation:

Legal play. A5's lateral move is legal and it is the initial location of the throw-in which rules where the thrower-in may pass the ball to his team-mate.

8. Art. 41 Goal tending and Interference with the ball

Situation 1:

A4 passes the ball to A5 over the basket for an alley-oop. In the meantime, B4 causes the ring or the backboard to vibrate. As a consequence A5, after receiving the pass, misses a shot for a field goal (dunk). Is this an interference with the ball violation?

Interpretation:

Yes. According to the rules, a dunk is considered as a shot for a field goal. If, in the judgement of the official, the vibration prevented the ball from entering the basket, he shall call a violation by B4 and award two points to team A.

Situation 2:

A4 attempts a shot for a three-point field goal near to the end of the game. Whilst the ball is in the air, the signal sounds for the end of the game. After the signal B4 causes the ring or the backboard to vibrate and because of this action, in the judgement of the official, the ball has been prevented from entering the basket.

Interpretation:

'Interference with the ball' violation and three points are awarded to A4.

9. Art. 56 Special situations

Situation 1:

Whilst team A is in control of the live ball, A4 commits an offensive foul on B4, immediately followed by a personal foul by B5 on A5. This is team B's 5th foul in this period.

Interpretation:

- a) A4 fouls B4, team control foul
Penalty: Team B is entitled to the ball
- b) B5 fouls A5, team control foul
Penalty: Despite team B's 5th foul, team A is entitled to the ball only.

The two equal penalties against the teams cancel each other out. The game shall be resumed with a throw-in for team A as it was this team that was in the control of the ball when the first foul was called.

Situation 2:

B4 commits an unsportsmanlike foul on shooter A4 and the ball enters the basket. Then A5 commits a technical foul.

Interpretation:

Two or three points are awarded to A4 and:

- a) An unsportsmanlike foul is charged against B4.
Penalty: One free throw and possession of the ball at mid-court for team A.
- b) A technical foul is charged against A5.
Penalty: One free throw and possession of the ball at mid-court for team B.

Two equal penalties against the teams cancel each other out. The game shall be resumed with a throw-in from the end line for team B.

Situation 3:

A4 attempts a jump shot for a field goal. Whilst the ball is in the air, the 24-second device signal sounds. After the signal, but with A4 still in the air, B4 commits an unsportsmanlike foul on A4.

Interpretation:

The unsportsmanlike foul of B4 cannot be ignored.

- a) The ball enters the basket.
Two or three points are awarded to A4 because no 24-second violation has occurred.
Penalty: One additional free throw for A4 followed by possession of the ball at mid-court.
- b) The ball does not enter the basket.
 - b1) First team A committed a 24-second violation. Therefore A4 can no longer be considered as being in the act of shooting.
Penalty: Possession of the ball for team B.
 - b2) Then B4 committed an unsportsmanlike foul.
Penalty: Two free throws for A4 and possession of the ball for team A.

The penalty for the 24-second violation is cancelled, as it is not the last penalty to be administered. The game shall be resumed with two free throws for A4 followed by possession of the ball at mid-court for team A.

10. Mechanics of officiating

Situation 1:

Sometimes we are witnessing situations where after a basket or a pass, the ball rolls away into out-of-bounds and there is nobody to bring it back.

Interpretation:

Officials are strongly advised to play an active role in all such situations. Running a few meters and bringing back the ball will not undermine their authority.

Situation 2:

Team A has scored a basket, the ball is lying on the floor and all the players from team B, for various reasons, are looking away, trying to delay the throw-in.

Interpretation:

Almost immediately, the nearest official shall take the ball. If there is still nobody behind the end line, he shall put the ball on the floor and begin with the five-second count.

Remember: Your primary duty is to restart the game as soon as possible!