

Uniformity and Consistency...Play-Calling Proficiency

Act of Shooting

When making a ruling on a player in the act of shooting, it is important to follow the entire shot-taking process. This means following an airborne shooter all the way back to the floor. Officials should resist the natural inclination to immediately follow the flight of the ball to the basket. Rather, they should focus on the defender and look for any illegal point of contact that might occur. Then the official should follow the shooter all the way back to the floor, identifying whether or not the defender fouls him before/after he lands. [CLICK HERE](#) to watch the mechanics of the covering official on a three-point attempt. Note how he is in no hurry to follow the flight of the ball and has plenty of time to rule on the shot attempt. There's still a lot of officiating that needs to continue before the ball gets to the basket.

Mercy Me

The MHSAA "mercy rule" adaptation is something you may wonder why you need to know... that is, until you need to know it. Unless you've recently reviewed it, you likely won't have it on the forefront of your mind. From time to time, take a look at the Point-Differential Rule outlined on page 20 of the MHSAA *Officials Guidebook*.

BASKETBALL—Point-Differential Rule

At all levels of play in MHSAA tournaments; after the first half when one team has a lead of 40 points or more, a runner clock shall be established. The clock shall revert to regular time schemes should the score be reduced to a 30-point lead or less. During any running clock mode, the clock shall be stopped as normal for all timeouts and between quarters; and for free throws during the last

two minutes of the game. By league or conference adoption the point differentials (both to establish a running clock and then resume normal timing) may be modified at the junior high/middle school level only.

Take a moment before each game to speak with the clock operator and discuss instruction if/when a running clock situation presents itself.

Breaking the Ice

A good pre-game is critical to get all the members of the crew on the same page. This time to sync up the goes along way in practice and appearance of uniformity and consistency on the court. We've all worked with officials that may be hesitant or resistant to conducting a pre-game. Often times our most experienced partners are the ones that push back the most. If you'd like to get the benefit of their experience and knowledge, but are not sure how to approach the subject, try breaking the ice with this type of conversation-starter:

"We haven't worked together very often, but I know you have a lot of experience working with a lot of officials whose positioning or play-calling mechanics aren't what are approved or accepted. When I'm out there on the court with you, what are a couple of things you hope that I DON'T DO as your partner today?"

This approach might prompt others on the crew to ask the same thing and ultimately elicit some important pre-game points. Adding these types of ice-breakers will open avenues for pregame conversations that will further the success of the crew that game and in the season.

Rules Review: Which results in a designated throw-in at a spot closest to the foul?

- A. Flagrant personal foul
- B. Intentional foul
- C. Common foul prior to the bonus
- D. All of the above

Last Bulletin's Review: A1 releases a field goal attempt. While it is still in the air, which cause(s) the ball to become immediately dead and nullifies a score if the attempt does proceed through the basket? The answer is a Team A violation such as A3 excessively swinging her elbows.