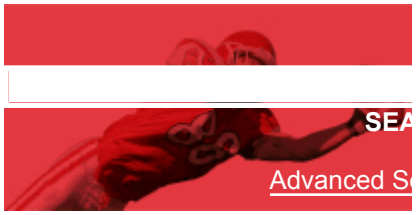

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Lane Players Can Release When Free Throw is Attempted in High School Basketball

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Players in marked lane spaces will be able to move into the lane when the ball is released by the free-throw shooter beginning with the 2014-15 high school basketball season. Previously, players could not release until the ball touched the ring or backboard or until the free throw ended.

This change in Rule 9-1-4 was one of four major rules changes recommended by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Basketball Rules Committee at its April 14-16 meeting in Indianapolis. All recommendations were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

The committee noted that the current rule of players in marked lane spaces not releasing until the ball touches the ring or backboard creates two obstacles for officials: 1) attempting to watch the ball strike the ring or backboard while simultaneously attempting to observe if any players/free thrower violate the lane-line restrictions, and 2) insufficient time for the perimeter official(s) to obtain optimum angles on the players involved in rebounding a missed try.

“In recent years, we have moved players along the lane spaces up and removed excess players along the lane lines, so the rationale for changing this rule to its current status is no longer an issue,” said Theresia Wynns, NFHS director of sports and officials education and staff liaison to the NFHS Basketball Rules Committee.

In an effort to eliminate excessive contact on ball-handlers and dribblers outside of the lane area, the committee added Article 12 to Rule 10-6 on contact. As a result, the following acts will constitute a foul when committed against a ball-handler/dribbler: 1) placing two hands on the player, 2) placing an

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extended arm bar on the player, 3) placing and keeping a hand on the player and 4) contacting the player more than once with the same hand or alternating hands.

The rules committee also expanded the definition of an intentional foul in Rule 4-19-3d, which now states that an intentional foul is “excessive contact with an opponent while the ball is live or until an airborne shooter returns to the floor.”

Wynns said that this revision will address the issue of contact with the elbow and should reduce the subjectivity in making rulings on intentional fouls.

In the final rules change, the committee expanded Rule 3-5-3 by identifying anything worn on the arm and/or leg as a sleeve, except a knee brace. These items, including tights, will now be permitted but must meet the color and logo restrictions in Rule 3-5-3. Previously, this rule permitted only arm sleeves and leg-compression sleeves.

Basketball is the second-most popular sport for girls and third-most popular for boys at the high school level, according to the 2012-13 High School Athletics Participation Survey conducted by the NFHS, with 433,120 girls and 538,676 boys participating nationwide. The sport ranks first in school sponsorship of girls and boys teams with 17,493 schools sponsoring the sport for girls and 17,856 sponsoring the sport for boys.

See Also: **Basketball; News; Rules Change;**

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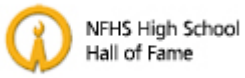

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