

- If the screen is set outside the field of vision (BLIND) of a stationary opponent, the screener must take a position which allows his opponent to make a normal movement (1 step) to avoid the contact.
- If the opponent of the screener is moving (MOTION), the screen must be set with regard to elements of time and distance. The screener must allow sufficient space (1 – 2 normal steps) for the opponent to avoid contact by stopping or changing direction.

CHARGE – BLOCK

- 75% of all charge–block calls will be challenged by the team penalised.
- The official must know what a legal guarding position is and what are the rights of the player with and without the ball. A legal guarding position requires the defender to be on the spot first, with two feet on the floor, upright, stationary and facing his opponent.
- Having established a legal guarding position the defender is allowed to move laterally or backwards in order to maintain his position in front of a moving opponent. He is NOT allowed to step FORWARDS to the player/ball.
- It is important that referees watch the whole play from beginning to end with specific reference to the actions of the defensive player prior to any contact that may occur.
- Be alert to 'flopping' by players. Note the point of contact. If a legal guarding position has been achieved, contact by the offensive player should be on the front of the torso, between the shoulders –chest– of the defensive player.
- If contact is on the shoulder, hip or leg of the defender then responsibility lies with the defender.
- Once the offensive player has succeeded in establishing his head and shoulders past the torso of his opponent (usually by speed of movement) responsibility for contact lies with the defensive player.
- If the offensive player has left the floor BEFORE the defensive player establishes his position, however late, he has the right to land in a predetermined spot on the floor.

UNSPORTSMANLIKE FOULS

- Any illegal action that is not a legitimate attempt to play the ball or an opponent should be considered as unsportsmanlike. Wrapping the arms around an opponent, grabbing a player with one or both hands, grabbing the shirt or shorts of an opponent are all unsportsmanlike actions.
- If a defensive player causes contact with an opponent from behind or the side in an attempt to stop a fast break and there is no opponent between the offensive player and the opponent's basket, then the contact shall be judged to be unsportsmanlike.
- When the ball is out of bounds for a throw in and is still in the hands of the official or is already at the disposal of the thrower–in and at that moment a defensive player on the court causes contact with a player of the team of the thrower–in also on the court and the foul is called, this shall be judged as unsportsmanlike.
- Excessive contact, undue roughness against an opponent (especially airborne), even when trying to play the ball is also considered an unsportsmanlike. All these situations must be interpreted within the spirit and intent of the unsportsmanlike foul rule.
- What is an unsportsmanlike foul must apply at any time of the game, in the first minute and the last minute. Do not be influenced by the intensity, score and time remaining in the game.



BUILDING BETTER BASKETBALL

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CONTACT INTERPRETATIONS



This referee's series has been re-introduced by Basketball Victoria and the Victorian Basketball Referees Association. Articles are written by Bill Mildenhall, the Referee Development Officer for Basketball Victoria.

For more information visit www.vbra.basketball.net.au

From the beginning of an official's career, it is constantly stated that basketball is a non contact sport. However, when 10 players are moving within the confines of a basketball court, contact is inevitable. But not all contact is illegal. Referees need to develop an ability to recognise and judge the balance between penalising the obvious, clear illegal contact that places opponents at a disadvantage and the small innocuous, sometimes incidental contact that does not interfere with the flow of the game.

Article 47 in the Official Rule Book states – “When deciding on penalising contact and or deciding on a violation, the officials shall in each instance regard and weigh up the following fundamental principles;”

1. “The spirit and intent of the rules and the need to uphold the integrity of the game.”
2. “Consistency in the application of the concept of advantage/disadvantage whereby the officials should not seek to interrupt the flow of the game unnecessarily, in order to penalise personal contact that is incidental and which does not give the player responsible an advantage nor place his opponent at a disadvantage.”
3. “Consistency in the application of common sense to each game, bearing in mind the abilities of the players concerned and their attitude and conduct during the game.”
4. “Consistency in the maintenance of a balance between game control and game flow, having a feeling for what the participants are trying to do and calling what is right for the game.”

In the interests and the integrity of the game, it is imperative that referees understand that the above philosophy is primarily directed at levels above what we normally find at the “Grass Roots Level.”

At the risk of over simplification, 99% of “grass roots, domestic basketball” is not conducive to officials totally applying the philosophies as written in the rule book. It is extremely important at this level of basketball that the players enjoy their involvement and maintain a desire to continue to play. Players at this level, often atone to the adage “basketball is a non contact sport” and consequently do not appreciate and understand the interpretation of advantage/disadvantage. As a result, it is best for lesser experienced officials and for those officials involved in “grass roots, domestic basketball” to only attempt to apply this type of philosophy when everything is conducive to do so.

It is vitally important that the referees consider the following crucial principles;

- **Bear in mind the abilities and the attitudes of those involved in the game.**
- **Maintain game control and understand what the players want and are capable of doing.**
- **Referees must consistently apply a common-sense approach to each game, bearing in mind the abilities of the players concerned and their attitude and conduct during the game.**
- **If referees are unsure of the abilities and attitudes of the players, then the common-sense approach is to apply a literal interpretation of the rules. That is, follow the rules exactly as stated, which would require any contact infraction and to be called.**

Like all sports, there are many variations and standards of basketball players' abilities. It is the responsibility of the sporting officials to recognise and adapt to these variations.

Remember, officiating is a customer service business. The customers are there for an enjoyable athletic experience. It is the referee's responsibility to enhance this experience and make sure

the game is played within the spirit of the rules. To help officials understand dealing with contact the major contact situations have been identified and briefly analysed below.

With all CONTACT that is determined as ILLEGAL, the officials must address it from the beginning of the game and call it consistently throughout the whole game. Players and coaches will adjust if the officiating is consistent.

HAND-CHECKING

- Hand-checking is the "illegal" use of the hand(s)/arm(s) to impede/influence the movement/progress of an opponent with or without the ball.
- A defensive player may not place his hand/forearm upon an opponent with the intention of holding or pushing (steering) that player. To momentarily place a hand/forearm upon an opponent is not necessarily illegal unless the action is constantly repeated. A verbal warning should always be given in order to prevent the illegal action from taking place.
- Under no circumstances may the defensive player place two hands upon an opponent, even within his cylinder.
- A defensive player FACING his opponent has no legal reason to place his hand/forearm upon an opponent, as defence is played with the feet.
- Similarly, an offensive player dribbling the ball is not permitted to use a hand/forearm to prevent his defensive opponent from legally "stealing" the ball.
- If hand-checking is not penalised then players will react aggressively thereby creating loss of game control, even momentarily.

POST PLAY

- A post player may place a forearm (within his own cylinder) on the back of an opponent, but the first and only contact must be with the forearm or the chest/stomach.
- This also applies to a player defending a dribbler who is backing into (not facing) the basket, the first and only contact must be with the forearm or the chest/stomach.
- The use of the forearm or chest/stomach must not dislodge or push the opposing player from his position.
- Excessive physical play to dislodge a player from a legally established position must not be allowed.
- Pay attention to players who interlock arms when jostling for position. Warn the player, who initiates the arm-locking and if there is no response, call the foul.
- Watch the whole play from the beginning in order to determine who created the illegal contact, otherwise call a double foul.
- There can be no "let them play" attitude when the contact is excessive or rough.

SCREENING

- The purpose of screening is to prevent an opponent from reaching a desired position on the court.
- For screening to be legal the player setting the screen must be STATIONARY with both feet on the floor. Contact, which occurs because the player setting the screen is moving is illegal.
- If the screen is set legally then the contact should be considered incidental. CONTACT must occur for an illegal screen to exist.
- If the screen is set within the field of vision (OPEN) of a stationary opponent, the screener may stand as close as possible to his opponent without causing contact, either to the FRONT or SIDE.