



WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

2023-24 NCAA Women's Basketball

RULE INTERPRETATIONS/CLARIFICATIONS

As of 2/14/24

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2/14/24. Fouling at the End of the Game (A.R. 357 and Rule 10-10.5 and 10-13).

Fouling near the end of the game is an acceptable coaching and playing strategy. Teams also foul near the end of quarters when they have “fouls to give” to disrupt the offensive flow of their opponents attempting a last shot of the quarter. Officials are asked to judge players' actions and determine whether illegal contact is personal, intentional, or disqualifying. Sometimes, these actions fit neatly into one bucket, but an action may occasionally fit into more than one bucket. When this occurs, a decision has to be made within the spirit and intent of the playing rules. Such a convergence occurs with two contact rules: Rule 10-10.5, often referred to as contact on the ball handler/dribbler, and Rule 10-13, the Intentional Foul rule.

Under Rule 10-10.5, when a defender contacts the ball handler dribbler:

- Anytime with two hands;
- By placing a hand (front or back of the hand) on the ball handler/dribbler and keeping it on the ball handler/dribbler;
- More than once with the same hand or with alternating hands; or
- With an armpit,

the defender has committed a foul **without exception**. However, under the intentional foul rule (Rule 10-13.1.a), it is an intentional foul when a player makes illegal contact with an opponent that “is not a legitimate attempt to make a direct play on the ball.”

Technically speaking, most Rule 10-10.5 fouls could be considered Intentional Fouls because they do not involve a legitimate attempt to make a play on the ball. This is not the intent of the rule. When a player commits a Rule 10-10.5 foul in an attempt to tactically foul and the only “violation” of the Intentional Foul rule is that this is not a legitimate attempt to make a direct play on the ball, it shall be ruled a personal foul. However, when a Rule 10-10.5 foul is designed to negate an opponent's obvious advantageous position (Rule 10-13.1.b) or is excessive, hard, and/or unnecessary (Rule 10-13.1.e), it has become an Intentional Foul.

11/14/23 – Boundary Lines, Restraining Lines and Other Markings (Rule 1-3.3).

The safety of players and game officials during competition is of extreme importance. Often, game action takes players beyond boundary lines when making or completing a play, such as a “hustle” play to save a ball from going out of bounds or following a layup attempt. Officials are taught to look back over their shoulders at players when transitioning down the court as the new lead official. Players and officials expect space to be available beyond each end line. The playing rules require a restraining line 6 feet from each end line, when the space is available, to delineate a space from

which nonplaying personnel, such as but not limited to cheerleaders, mascots, still photographers, and video camera people, are prohibited while the ball is live. This restraining line may be a solid, interrupted, or mathematical line formed between two colors, such as a wide border along the end line whose back edge is a minimum of 6 feet from the end line (although not all wide borders are 6 feet wide). When space is not available to mark the 6-foot restraining line, such as a wall, seating, press tables, etc., the line should be marked using the maximum available distance. Officials should ensure that this area is free from nonplaying personnel when the ball is live to minimize the risk of injury to players and officials. Game management should be informed before the start of the game of any potential issues concerning the restraining line and nonplaying personnel located within the prohibited area during a live ball.

Additionally, it has been recommended for quite some time that, where space permits, a 3-foot escape lane be provided on each side of the basket stanchion to provide additional space for players when the play takes them beyond the end line. This escape lane extends to either the 6-foot restraining line or the back of the basket stanchion, whichever is further from the end line. Officials should confirm with game management whether an escape lane is present before the competition starts.

11/14/23 – Player/Substitute Technical Fouls (Rule 10-12.4.g).

During a throw-in, an opponent of the thrower is prohibited from reaching through the boundary-line plane and touching or dislodging the ball while it is in possession of the thrower or touching the ball while it is being passed to a teammate who is outside the boundary line, such as during a throw-in following a goal or awarded goal for goaltending or defensive basket interference. The opponent is also prohibited from breaking the boundary-line plane until the ball has crossed that boundary line (Rule 7-6.9.b).

What is not addressed in the technical-foul rule is when an opponent of the thrower reaches across the boundary and touches the ball before it crosses the boundary-line plane on its way into the playing court. The rule intends to allow the throw-in team to execute the throw-in without any hindrance by the opposition by contacting the ball before the ball crosses the boundary-line plane. When an opponent of the thrower reaches through the boundary-line plane and contacts the released throw-in before the ball has crossed the boundary-line plane, the opponent shall immediately be assessed a player/substitute technical foul. When this is the first instance of a player reaching through the boundary-line plane during a throw-in, it shall also serve as a team warning (Rule 4-9.1.g).

11/1/23 – Foul committed by or against a teammate of the shooter (“off-ball” foul) during free throws (Rule 11-3.1.r).

Officials may now choose to use replay at any time during the game to determine whether a successful goal shall count or be canceled when a foul is committed by or against a teammate of the shooter (an “off-ball” foul). It is important to note that these fouls may also occur during free-throw situations, and it is permissible by rule for officials to use an available replay system to determine whether a successful free throw should count or be canceled. This replay review must occur before the ball becomes live following the foul regardless of which team commits the foul. A coach’s appeal must also occur before the ball becomes live following the foul.

Play 1: A1 is awarded two free throws. Close to the release of the first free-throw try, A2 fouls B2. The ball enters the basket. The officials use the available replay system to determine whether the goal shall count or be canceled.

Ruling 1: (a) When replay determines that the ball was still in A1's hand(s) when the foul occurred, the goal shall be canceled because the foul is an offensive foul and, with no players in marked lane spaces A1 will be re-awarded the free throw followed by the second free throw. Following the last free throw:

1. When the last free throw is successful, Team B's throw-in will be made from any point outside the end line.
2. When the last free throw is unsuccessful, Team B's throw-in will be from a designated spot nearest to the location of the foul.

(b) When replay determines that the ball was released prior to the foul occurring, the goal shall count. A1 is awarded their second free throw with no players in marked lane spaces. Following the last free throw:

1. When Team B is in the bonus, B2 is awarded two free throws.
2. When Team B is not in the bonus:
 - a. When the last free throw is successful, Team B's throw-in will be made from any point outside the end line.
 - b. When the last free throw is unsuccessful, Team B's throw-in will be from a designated spot nearest to the location of the foul.

Play 2: A1 is awarded two free throws. Near the release of the first free-throw try, B2 fouls A2. The ball enters the basket. The officials use the available replay system to determine whether the goal shall count or be canceled.

Ruling 2: (a) When replay determines that A1 was not in the act of shooting (so continuous motion does not apply) when the foul occurred, the goal shall be canceled and, with no players in marked lane spaces, A1 will be re-awarded the free throw followed by the second free throw. Following the last free throw:

3. When Team A is in the bonus, A2 is awarded two free throws.
4. When Team A is not in the bonus, Team A's throw-in will be from the nearest of the "four spots".

(b) When replay determines that A1 was in the act of shooting (continuous motion) or the try had been released when the foul occurred, the goal shall count. A1 is awarded their second free throw with no players in marked lane spaces. Following the last free throw:

3. When Team A is in the bonus, A2 is awarded two free throws.
4. When Team A is not in the bonus, Team A's throw-in will be from the nearest of the "four spots" when replay shows the ball is still in A1's hand(s) or the nearest designated spot when the try has been released.

11/1/23 – Mandatory Use of Replay (Rule 11-2.1.a.3).

With the new rule that requires a technical-foul penalty for faking being fouled after a team has been warned for a first offense, it is possible for a faking play to occur near the expiration of time in a quarter or overtime. In this situation, officials are required to use the available replay system to determine whether the faking action occurred before the quarter or overtime ended.

Play 3: Following a team warning for faking being fouled, A1 fakes being fouled near the expiration of time in the first quarter.

Ruling 3: Officials shall use replay to determine whether there is still time remaining in the first quarter. (a) When the faking action occurs with time remaining in the quarter, the correct time shall be placed on the game clock. Team B will be awarded two free throws followed by an awarded throw-in at a designated spot at the division line opposite the scorers' table.

(b) When the faking action occurs after the reading of zeroes on the game clock, the quarter has ended, and the second quarter will begin by awarding Team B two free throws and the ball for a throw-in at a designated spot at the division line opposite the scorers' table. This throw-in is not an alternating-possession throw-in, and the possession arrow shall remain unchanged. This team technical foul is Team A's first team foul in the second quarter.

Play 4: Near the expiration of time in the third quarter, shooter A1 fakes being fouled after releasing the ball for a try for goal. Time expires after the release of the try, which is unsuccessful. Officials use replay and determine that:

- (a) A1's faking action occurred before the reading of zeroes on the game clock.
- (b) A1's faking action occurred after time expired but before the try ended.
- (c) A1's faking action occurred after time expired and after the try ended.

Ruling 4: In (a), When the faking action occurs with time remaining in the quarter, the correct time shall be placed on the game clock. Team B will be awarded two free throws followed by an awarded throw-in at a designated spot at the division line opposite the scorers' table. In (b), although time expired before the faking action, the quarter does not end until the try for goal ends (Rule 5-7.3.c). Team B is awarded two free throws for the team technical foul, but the throw-in to begin the next quarter will be an alternating-possession throw-in because no penalty or part of a penalty shall carry over from one quarter or overtime to another (Rule 5-7.4). In (c), when the faking action occurs after the reading of zeroes on the game clock and after the try ended, the quarter has ended, and the second quarter will begin by awarding Team B two free throws and the ball for a throw-in at a designated spot at the division line opposite the scorers' table. This throw-in is not an alternating-possession throw-in, and the possession arrow shall remain unchanged. This team technical foul is Team A's first team foul in the fourth quarter.

9/27/23 – Supplemental Apparel (Rule 1-23).

With the combination of the old Rule 1-23 and 1-24 in the new rule books, there were other changes made to supplemental apparel which were not specifically listed with the overall rewrite of Rules 1-22, 23, and 24. Most notably, the sleeves on an undershirt need not be the same length and tights are not required to have two legs of equal length, or even two legs. Approved rulings in the previous case book were deleted to reflect these changes as well.

9/22/23 – Game Clocks, Shot Clocks, and their Associated Lights (Rules 1-18.4 and 1-19.4)

A.R. 326 depicts a scenario when a team is the "home" team but is not playing on its "home" court and subsequently is not penalized for not having a properly marked division line or center circle. This may also be construed to apply to having a proper game clock display, red light/red LED lights, or properly mounted shot clock. When an institution is playing at an off-campus site that is not under its direct control or a conference tournament is played at an off-campus neutral site, such

as when they play in a professional team's facility, the "home" team shall not be penalized when the timing equipment and the associated lights do not comply with NCAA playing rules.

9/8/23 – Restricted Area (Rules 1-8.1, 4-26, 10-4.7, and 10-10.15).

The purpose of the restricted area is to prevent a defender from obtaining and maintaining a position under the basket for the purposes of drawing an offensive/charging foul when the defender has time to get out from beneath the basket. With the reduction of the restricted area to under the basket and its application to all defenders, there exists the possibility that a defender may not have the opportunity to get out of the restricted area when a move to the basket from close proximity to it is imminent in a rebounding situation.

Play: Player A1 attempts a try for goal which is unsuccessful and rebounded by A2. In (1) A2, located in the lane area, immediately attempts a "put back" and makes illegal contact by crashing into the torso of opponent B2, who is located within the restricted area, or (2) A2, located on the wing just inside the three-point line, gains control of the rebound and immediately drives toward the basket. A2 makes illegal contact by crashing into the torso of defender B2, who is located within the restricted area.

Ruling: In (1), the official shall rule an offensive foul on A2 because B2 did not have time or distance to get out of the restricted area. In (2), this is a restricted-area blocking foul on B2 because B2 had time and distance to obtain and maintain a legal position outside the restricted area.

9/8/23 – Fighting (Rule 10-15).

Last season saw an uptick in the number of reported altercations/fights across women's basketball, and some questions have arisen regarding the correct adjudication of the playing rules in these situations. By rule, a player has committed a fighting act when they:

- a. Strike, or attempt to strike, another player, coach, or other team personnel with, but not limited to, a fist, hand, arm, foot, knee, or leg in a **combative** manner, regardless of whether there is contact or not;
- b. Use unsporting acts or comments that, in the opinion of the official, provoke the other individual to retaliate by fighting or
- c. Use a closed fist in an unsporting manner. In this instance, the individual has initiated a fighting act.

When individuals commit any of the above-listed acts, they have committed a disqualifying foul for fighting. The offender must immediately report to their team's locker room, and they are subject to suspension for fighting.

Not all action during an altercation (actual or perceived) is a fight. During a live ball, when an individual strikes an opponent with the hand, elbow, arm, foot, knee, or leg in a **noncombative** manner and the act is not only excessive but also severe or extreme, it shall be ruled a disqualifying foul and not a fighting action. The individual is still ejected and must report to their team's locker room, but they are **not** subject to the fighting penalty. Additionally, when the defined body part mentioned above is used to illegally strike an opponent, but the contact is not severe or extreme, the official shall make a judgment as to whether the contact is an intentional foul.

Regarding what team members or bench personnel are permitted to do to de-escalate a fight, different rules codes define which game participants may fill this role (sometimes called “peacemakers.”) For NCAA women’s basketball, the only individuals permitted by rule to be “peacemakers” are the head coach and any assistant coaches (Rule 10-12.5.b.1 and A.R. 362). Players may contact their teammates to restore order but may not initiate contact with members of the opposing team or spectators when a fight has or may break out. Still, they may seek to move their teammate away from any confrontation. When a player grabs an opposing player when a fight has or may break out, they are to be assessed a disqualifying foul, but they are not subject to the fighting suspension.

Bench personnel, outside of the head coach and any number of assistant coaches, are required to remain in the bench area when a fight has or may occur (Rule 10-12.5.b.1). Often, an altercation or fight will occur within or in close proximity to a team’s bench area. The rules are designed to protect individuals from harm’s way whenever possible. When an altercation/fight occurs so close to, or within, a team’s bench area that bench personnel could potentially be put in harm’s way, bench personnel from that team may leave the bench area in their half of the playing court (not to cross the division line) to get away from the altercation. Provided these members of bench personnel do not involve themselves in the altercation/fight, they are not penalized when they leave the bench area to protect themselves from a harmful situation.

9/8/23 – Contact on the Ball Handler/Dribbler (Rule 10-10.5, 10-6.3.a, and 10-6.5).

Rule 10-10.5 prohibits a defender from contacting the ball handler/dribbler, outside of one “hot-stove” touch, to promote freedom of movement of the ball handler/dribbler. It is the responsibility of the defender to avoid contact on the ball handler/dribbler by using an impermissible body part. Rule 10-6.5 permits a player to extend their arms fully or partially, other than vertically, so long as this contact does not hinder the opponent. As it applies to a ball handler/dribbler, such contact with the defender’s extended arm is illegal because it is not the permitted “hot-stove” touch with the front or back of one hand. While a player is permitted to hold their hands and arms in front of their face or body for protection in a recoil action rather than a pushing action to absorb force from imminent contact by an opponent, it is expected that the hands or arms are close to their body for protection and are not extended outward in a manner that affects the movement of their opponent. When an opponent’s arms are extended out and make contact with the ball handler/dribbler in a manner prohibited by Rule 10-10.5, a foul shall be ruled on the opponent.