



**FIBA**  
We Are Basketball

# THE FIBA OFFICIAL BASKETBALL RULES CHANGES VALID AS OF 1 OCTOBER 2020

Published June 2020  
version 1.0

The content cannot be modified  
and presented with the FIBA logo,  
without written permission from the  
FIBA Referee Operations.

Throughout this publication, all references  
made to a player, coach, official, etc., in  
the male gender also apply to the female  
gender. It must be understood that this is  
done for practical reasons only.

June 2020,  
All Rights Reserved.

---

**FIBA - International Basketball Federation**

5 Route Suisse, PO Box 29  
1295 Mies Switzerland  
fiba.basketball  
Tel: +41 22 545 00 00  
Fax: +41 22 545 00 99

---

This material is created by the  
FIBA Referee Operations.

If you identify an error or a discrepancy in  
this material, please notify the FIBA Referee  
Operations at [refereeing@fiba.basketball](mailto:refereeing@fiba.basketball)

## FOREWORD

---

FIBA Official Basketball Rules (OBR) are approved by the FIBA Central Board and they are available for the entire basketball family.

According to the established procedure, the FIBA's Rules Advisory Group (RAG), comprised of basketball and refereeing experts, studies closely all proposals for the rule changes before submitting them to the FIBA Technical Commission for the final review. The key stakeholders - coaches (WABC - World Association of Basketball Coaches), FIBA Players Commission, NBA and NCAA representatives - are also involved in the analysis of the rule changes.

Normally the new edition of the OBR becomes valid starting as of 1 October of any given year .

The Official Basketball Rules comprise two sections: a) Basketball Rules and b) Basketball Equipment. They are published in two separate documents.

In order to facilitate the preparation for the new rule changes worldwide, FIBA publishes the following documents.

- a. Official Basketball Rules & Basketball Equipment "Yellow Tracking Working Document" in English\*
- b. Official Basketball Rules & Basketball Equipment in English (no tracking)
- c. Summary of the Rule Changes in English, French and Spanish\*\*
- d. Official Basketball Rules Interpretations in English (the new edition will be published in September 2020)

Complementary material (will be published in June/July 2020)

- e. PowerPoint presentations & videos to explain rule changes in practice.

\*= All changes (new rules & editorial changes) are highlighted in yellow.

\*\* = Does not include editorial changes

OBR 2020 is available at [fiba.basketball](http://fiba.basketball)

## CONTENTS

---

1. Art. 5 Players: Injury	4
2. Art. 15 Player in act of shooting	6
3. Art. 33 Cylinder / Basketball movements	7
4. Art. 35 Double foul	9
5. Art. 37 Unsportsmanlike foul	10
6. Art. 48 Scorer and assistant scorer: Duties / Art. 49 Timer: Duties	12
7. Appendix B – The Scoresheet	13
8. Appendix F – The Instant Replay System (IRS)	14
9. 2020 OFFICIAL BASKETBALL RULES – BASKETBALL EQUIPMENT	16

# 2020 OFFICIAL BASKETBALL RULES

## 1. ART. 5 PLAYERS: INJURY

### REASON FOR CHANGE

In addition to the treatment, also the assistance to the player(s) from the team members and accompanying delegation members of the own team was added.

The Art. 5. was renamed, Art. 5.3 was amended, new Art. 19.2.6 was added and Art. 44.2.5 was amended.

### NEW RULEBOOK TEXT

#### Art. 5 Players: Injury and assistance

- 5.1 In the event of injury to a player(s), the referees may stop the game.
- 5.2 If the ball is live when an injury occurs, the referee shall not blow his whistle until the team in control of the ball has shot for a field goal, lost control of the ball, withheld the ball from play or the ball has become dead. If it is necessary to protect an injured player, the referees may stop the game immediately.
- 5.3 If the injured player cannot continue to play immediately (within approximately 15 seconds) or, if he receives treatment or assistance from his own coaches, team members and/or accompanying delegation members, he must be substituted unless the team is reduced to fewer than 5 players on the playing court.
- 5.4 Head coaches, assistant coaches, substitutes, excluded players and accompanying delegation members may enter the playing court, only with the permission of a referee, to attend to an injured player before he is substituted.
- 5.5 A doctor may enter the playing court, without the permission of a referee if, in the doctor's judgement, the injured player requires immediate medical treatment.
- 5.6 During the game, any player who is bleeding or has an open wound must be substituted. He may return to the playing court only after the bleeding has stopped and the affected area or open wound has been completely and securely covered.
- 5.7 If the injured player or any player who is bleeding or has an open wound recovers during a time-out taken by either team, before the timer's signal for the substitution, that player may continue to play.
- 5.8 Players who have been designated by the head coach to begin the game or who receive treatment between free throws may be substituted in the event of an injury. In this case, the opponents are also entitled to substitute the same number of players, if they so wish.

### NEW RULEBOOK TEXT

#### Art. 19 Substitution

- 19.2.6 If the player receives any treatment or any assistance, he must be substituted unless the team is reduced to fewer than 5 players on the playing court.

**NEW RULEBOOK TEXT**

**Art. 44 Correctable errors**

44.2.5 Once an error that is still correctable has been recognised, and:

- The player involved in the correction of the error is on the team bench after being legally substituted, he must re-enter the playing court to participate in the correction of the error, at which point he becomes a player.

Upon completion of the correction, he may remain in the game unless a legal substitution has been requested again, in which case the player may leave the playing court.

- The player was substituted due to his injury **or assistance**, having committed 5 fouls or having been disqualified, his substitute must participate in the correction of the error.

## 2. ART. 15 PLAYER IN ACT OF SHOOTING

### REASON FOR CHANGE

There are the game situations when the players, coaches and referees are in doubts whether the foul occurred during the act of shooting or not. The act of shooting is defined now differently for a normal shot and for a shot during the continuous movement. The new wording is rather a better clarification of the rules than a rule change itself.

### NEW RULEBOOK TEXT

#### Art. 15 Player in the act of shooting

##### 15.1 Definition

15.1.1 A **shot** for a field goal or a free throw is when the ball is held in a player's hand(s) and is then thrown into the air towards the opponents' basket.

A **tap for a field goal** is when the ball is directed with the hand(s) towards the opponents' basket.

A **dunk for a field goal** is when the ball is forced downwards into the opponents' basket with one or both hands.

A continuous movement on drives to the basket or other moving shots is an action of a player who catches the ball while he is progressing or upon completion of the dribble and then continues with the shooting motion, usually upwards.

15.1.2 The **act of shooting on a shot**:

- **Begins when the player starts, in the judgement of a referee, to move the ball upwards towards the opponents' basket.**
- **Ends when the ball has left the player's hand(s), or if an entirely new act of shooting is made and, in case of an airborne shooter, both feet have returned to the floor.**

15.1.3 **The act of shooting in a continuous movement on drives to the basket or other moving shots:**

- **Begins when the ball has come to rest in the player's hand(s), upon completion of a dribble or a catch in the air and the player starts, in the judgment of the referee, the shooting motion preceding the release of the ball for a field goal.**
- **Ends when the ball has left the player's hand(s), or if an entirely new act of shooting is made and, in case of an airborne shooter, both feet have returned to the floor.**

15.1.4 There is no relationship between the number of legal steps taken and the act of shooting.

15.1.5 During **the** act of shooting the player might have his arm(s) held by an opponent, thus preventing him from scoring. In this case it is not essential that the ball leaves the player's hand(s).

15.1.6 When a player is in the act of shooting and after being fouled he passes the ball off, he is no longer considered to have been in the act of shooting.

## 3. ART. 33 CYLINDER / BASKETBALL MOVEMENTS

### REASON FOR CHANGE / ANALYSES

There are the game situations when the defensive players move into the cylinder of the offensive players with the ball. These situations generate high instances of elbowing, faking and side effects that are not good for the image of the game.

The players and coaches were asked to study these situations. They have realised that the existing rules describe only defensive player's cylinder and the rules do not specify the cylinder of the offensive player with and without the ball. Therefore, the description of the cylinder of an offensive player has been added to the rules.

### NEW RULEBOOK TEXT

#### Art. 33 Contact: General principles

##### 33.1 Cylinder principle

The cylinder principle is defined as the space within an imaginary cylinder occupied by a player on the floor. These dimensions, and the distance between his feet, shall vary according to the height and size of the player. It includes the space above the player and is limited to the boundaries of the cylinder of the defensive player or the offensive player without the ball which are:

- The front by the palms of the hands,
- The rear by the buttocks, and
- The sides by the outer edge of the arms and legs.

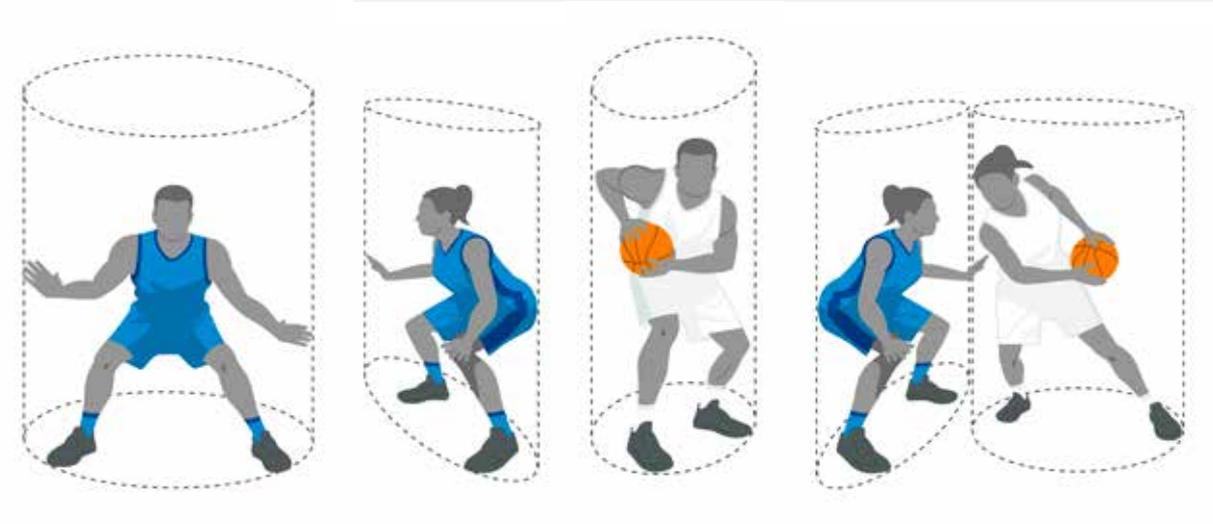
The hands and arms may be extended in front of the torso no further than the position of the feet and knees, with the arms bent at the elbows so that the forearms and hands are raised in the legal guarding position.

The defensive player may not enter the cylinder of the offensive player with the ball and cause an illegal contact when the offensive player is attempting a normal basketball play within his cylinder. The boundaries of the cylinder of the offensive player with the ball are:

- The front by the feet, bent knees and arms, holding the ball above the hips,
- The rear by the buttocks, and
- The sides by the outer edge of elbows and legs.

The offensive player with the ball must be allowed enough space for a normal basketball play within his cylinder. The normal basketball play includes starting a dribble, pivoting, shooting and passing.

The offensive player cannot spread his legs or arms outside of his cylinder and cause an illegal contact with the defensive player in order to gain an additional space.



**Diagram 5**    **Cylinder principle**

## 4. ART. 35 DOUBLE FOUL

### REASON FOR CHANGE

The rule did not present any major problem until the last rules modification and the subsequent changes in the Rules Interpretations. The recent rules state that all the fouls of the same penalty are considered as a double foul, however sometimes it is quite difficult for the referees to determine which player has committed the initial illegal contact. Therefore, the referees have practically stopped calling the double foul.

### NEW RULEBOOK TEXT

#### Art. 35 Double foul

##### 35.1 Definition

35.1.1 A double foul is a situation in which 2 opponents commit personal or unsportsmanlike/disqualifying fouls on each other at approximately the same time.

35.1.2 To consider 2 fouls as a double foul the following conditions must apply:

- Both fouls are player fouls.
- Both fouls involve physical contact.
- Both fouls are between the same 2 opponents fouling each other.
- Both fouls are either 2 personal or any combination of unsportsmanlike and disqualifying fouls.

##### 35.2 Penalty

A personal or unsportsmanlike/disqualifying foul shall be charged on each offender. No free throws shall be awarded and the game shall be resumed as follows:

If at approximately the same time as the double foul:

- A valid field goal, or a last free throw is scored, the ball shall be awarded to the non-scoring team for a throw-in from any place behind that team's endline.
- A team had control of the ball or was entitled to the ball, the ball shall be awarded to this team for a throw-in from the place nearest to the infraction.
- Neither team had control of the ball nor was entitled to the ball, a jump ball situation occurs.

## 5. ART. 37 UNSPORTSMANLIKE FOUL

### REASON FOR CHANGE

To clarify the game situation when:

- A defensive player (team B) deflects the ball from the offensive player (team A) and is close to catch the ball on his fast break with clear open path to the opponent's (team A) basket and
- A normal basketball illegal contact (foul) is now committed by the opponent player (team A).

According to the recent rule, the foul did not occur during team B fast break as team A has still been in the control of the ball.

### NEW RULEBOOK TEXT

#### Art. 37 Unsportsmanlike foul

##### 37.1 Definition

37.1.1 An unsportsmanlike foul is a player **contact which**, in the judgement of **a referee** is:

- **Contact with an opponent and not legitimately attempting** to directly play the ball within the spirit and intent of the rules.
- Excessive, hard contact caused by a player in an effort to play the ball or an opponent.
- An unnecessary contact caused by the defensive player in order to stop the progress of the offensive team in transition. This applies until the offensive player begins his act of shooting.
- **An illegal contact caused by the player** from behind or laterally on an opponent, **who is progressing towards the opponent's basket and there are no other** players between the **progressing player, the ball and the basket**. This applies until the offensive player begins his act of shooting.
- Contact by the defensive player on an opponent on the playing court when the game clock shows 2:00 minutes or less in the fourth quarter and in each overtime, when the ball is out-of-bounds for a throw-in and still in the hands of the **referee** or at the disposal of the player taking the throw-in.

37.1.2 The **referee** must interpret the unsportsmanlike fouls consistently throughout the game and to judge only the action.

## **37.2 Penalty**

37.2.1 An unsportsmanlike foul shall be charged on the offender.

37.2.2 Free throw(s) shall be awarded to the player who was fouled, followed by:

- A throw-in from the throw-in line in the team's frontcourt.
- A jump ball in the centre circle **at the beginning of** the first quarter.

The number of free throws shall be awarded as follows:

- If the foul is committed on a player not in the act of shooting: 2 free throws.
- If the foul is committed on a player in the act of shooting: the goal, if made, shall count and, in addition, 1 free throw.
- If the foul is committed on a player in the act of shooting and the goal is not made, 2 or 3 free throws.

37.2.3 A player shall be disqualified for the remainder of the game when he is charged with 2 unsportsmanlike fouls or 2 technical fouls, or with 1 technical foul and 1 unsportsmanlike foul.

37.2.4 If a player is disqualified under Art. 37.2.3, that unsportsmanlike foul shall be the only foul to be penalised and no additional penalty for the disqualification shall be administered.

## 6. ART. 48 SCORER AND ASSISTANT SCORER: DUTIES / ART. 49 TIMER: DUTIES

### REASON FOR CHANGE

The table officials have quite often stated that the scorer has much more duties than the other table officials. Therefore, few of his duties are now moved to the timer.

### NEW RULEBOOK TEXT

#### Art. 48 Scorer and assistant scorer: Duties

Art. 48.2 Has been deleted.

#### Art. 49 Timer: Duties

- 49.1 The timer shall be provided with a game clock and a stopwatch and shall:
- Measure playing time, time-outs and intervals of play.
  - Ensure that the game clock signal sounds very loudly and automatically at the end of a quarter or overtime.
  - Use any means possible to notify the referees immediately if his signal fails to sound or is not heard.
  - Indicate the number of fouls committed by each player by raising, in a manner visible to both head coaches, the marker with the number of fouls committed by that player.
  - Position the team foul marker on the scorer's table, at the end nearest to the bench of the team in the team foul penalty situation, when the ball becomes live after the fourth team foul in a quarter.
  - Effect substitutions.
  - Sound his signal only when the ball becomes dead and before the ball becomes live again. The sound of his signal does not stop the game clock or the game nor cause the ball to become dead.

## 7. APPENDIX B – THE SCORESHEET

---

### **REASON FOR CHANGE**

To clarify how to enter in the scoresheet the outcome of the game situation when a technical / disqualifying foul for leaving the team bench area and not assisting or attempting to assist the referees to maintain or to restore order (with or without an active involvement in the fight) is called against head coach, first assistant coach, substitute, excluded player or accompanying delegation member.

The recent rules state that when a head coach, leaving the team bench area during the fight and starts to fight too, he is charged with two disqualifying fouls, entered as two D2 (one for leaving the team bench area by himself and one for his own active involvement in the fight). With the new rules, he shall be charged with one disqualifying foul.

### **NEW RULEBOOK TEXT**

**B.8.3.14 Examples of disqualifying fouls for his active involvement in the fight on a head coach, first assistant coach, substitute, excluded player or accompanying delegation member:**

Irrespective of the number of persons disqualified for leaving the team bench area, a single technical foul 'B2' or 'D2' shall be charged on the head coach.

**If the coach is actively involved in the fight, he shall be charged with one 'D2' foul only.**

## 8. APPENDIX F – THE INSTANT REPLAY SYSTEM (IRS)

### REASON FOR CHANGE / ANALYSES

The existing Art. 46.12. Crew Chief: Duties and powers - Use of the IRS, became more and more complex. Therefore, due the growing importance and use of the IRS, it shall stay alone, as the new Rules Appendix F.

In addition, more consistent application of the IRS is required and the procedures how to use the IRS shall be standardised.

At present the crew chief can review the IRS to make the final decision. In the new rules at least 2 referees should participate at the review. In addition, once the IRS review has been finished, the referee who made a call (and not obligatory the crew chief) shall present the final decision. It is to avoid that if the crew chief shall present the final decision different to the referees' initial decision, it may give an image that the crew chief is overruling the referee.

### NEW RULEBOOK TEXT

#### Art. 46 Crew chief: Duties and powers

46.12 For games where the Instant Replay System is used please refer to Appendix F.

### F – INSTANT REPLAY SYSTEM

#### F.1 Definition

The Instant Replay System (IRS) review is the working method used by the referees to verify their decisions by watching the game situations on the screen of the approved video technology.

#### F.2 Procedure

F.2.1 The referees are authorised to use the IRS until they sign the scoresheet after the game, within the limits provided in this Appendix.

F.2.2 For the use of the IRS the following procedure shall apply:

- The crew chief shall approve the IRS equipment before the game, if available.
- The crew chief makes the decision whether the IRS review shall be used or not.
- If a decision of the referees is subject to the IRS review, the initial decision must be shown by the referees on the playing court.
- After gathering all information from other referees, table officials, commissioner, the review shall start as fast as possible.
- The crew chief and minimum 1 umpire (who made the call) shall take part at the review. If the crew chief made the call, he shall choose one of the umpire to accompany him for the review.
- During the IRS review the crew chief shall ensure that no unauthorised persons have access to the IRS monitor.
- The review shall take place before time-outs or substitutions are administered and before the game is resumed.

- After the review the referee who made the call shall report the final decision and the game shall be resumed accordingly.
- The initial decision of the referee(s) can be corrected only if the IRS review provides the referees with clear and conclusive visual evidence for the correction.
- After the crew chief has signed the scoresheet, an IRS review can no longer be performed.

### **F.3 Rule**

The following game situations may be reviewed:

**F.3.1** At the end of the quarter or overtime,

- whether a shot for a successful field goal was released before the game clock signal sounded for the end of the quarter or overtime.
- whether and how much time shall be displayed on the game clock, if:
  - An out-of-bounds violation of the shooter occurred.
  - A shot clock violation occurred.
  - An 8 second violation occurred.
  - A foul was committed before the end of the quarter or overtime.

**F.3.2** When the game clock shows 2:00 minutes or less in the fourth quarter and in each overtime,

- whether a shot for a successful field goal was released before the shot clock signal sounded.
- whether a foul away from a shooting situation was committed. In this case
  - whether the game or shot clock has expired,
  - whether the act of shooting has started,
  - whether the ball was still in the hand(s) of the shooter.
- whether a goaltending or basket interference violation was called correctly.
- to identify the player who has caused the ball to go out-of-bounds.

**F.3.3** During any time of the game,

- whether the successful field goal shall count for 2 or 3 points.
- whether 2 or 3 free throws shall be awarded, after a foul was called on a shooter for an unsuccessful field goal.
- whether a personal, unsportsmanlike or disqualifying foul met the criteria for such a foul or shall be upgraded or downgraded or shall be considered as a technical foul.
- after a malfunction of the game clock or the shot clock occurs, on how much time the clock(s) shall be corrected.
- to identify the correct free-throw shooter.
- to identify the involvement of team members, head coaches, first assistant coaches and accompanying delegation members during any act of violence.

# 2020 OFFICIAL BASKETBALL RULES BASKETBALL EQUIPMENT

## 2020 OFFICIAL BASKETBALL RULES – BASKETBALL EQUIPMENT

Category	Art	Amendment
General	N/A	Restructure of the FIBA competition levels for equipment. Level 1: National Team and Club Competitions plus other elite level national and international club and national team competitions. Level 2: Any other competition not included in Level 1.
General	N/A	Reference to the "Handbook of Test Methods and Requirements".
General	N/A	After purchase, FIBA Approved Equipment is valid for up to 8 years regardless of its current FIBA Approval status. After this 8-year period, any equipment which is no longer approved by FIBA must be replaced.
Backboard	1.1	Level 1 backboard material: Non-reflective laminated safety glass or tempered glass, with a thickness of between 11.8 mm and 13.5 mm.
Backboard	1.1	Level 2 backboard material options added: Laminated/tempered glass; acrylic or polycarbonate; wood, fiberglass, steel or aluminium.
Backboard	1.1	Backboard rigidity test removed.
Basket ring	1.2	NCS and RAL colour references updated.
Backboard support structure	1.4	Level 2-dimensional requirement added for safety purposes: At least 1,000 mm, measured from the outer edge of the end line to the front of the backstop padding.
Backboard support structure	1.4	Backboard vibration test added.
Backstop padding	1.5	Padding shall have a peak deceleration value of 500 m/s <sup>2</sup> or less.
Backstop padding	1.5	Dimensions updated to correspond with the current market.
Basketballs	2	Ball rebound test procedure updated.
Basketballs	2	Ball shall be marked with the recommended inflation pressure or pressure range.
Basketballs	2	Circumference and weight requirements updated to reduce the allowed range.
Basketballs	2	Size 5 Lightweight (360 - 390 g) ball allowed for Mini's competitions.
Basketballs	2	Valve leak test replaced by the loss of pressure test and the inflation stress test (Level 1 only).
Basketballs	2	Practice/grip test removed.

Category	Art	Amendment
Scoreboard	3	A red square shall be used to indicate team foul situation.
Scoreboard	3	An 'O' shall be used to indicate overtime.
Scoreboard	3	It shall be possible to add and remove player fouls independently of team fouls.
Scoreboard	3	Impact test according to DIN 18032-3 removed.
Shot clock	5	Shot clock durability test added.
Team foul markers	8	To be red after the ball becomes live again after the 4th team foul was committed.
Flooring	10	Wear resistance, specular gloss and rolling load tests added.
Flooring	10	Area deflection test removed.
Flooring	10	Mobile wooden flooring requirement increased to 50 % force reduction.
Flooring	10	Synthetic Flooring requirements for vertical deformation and force reduction separated into relevant categories: Point Elastic; Mixed Elastic; Area Elastic and Combined Elastic.
Flooring	10	Stickers and paints must adhere to the same slip performance and specular gloss criteria as ordinary floor areas.
Lighting	12	Descriptions and requirements for flicker factor, colour rendering and colour temperature added.
Whistle controlled timing systems	13	The system shall have: A response time of 0.1 seconds or less. Cover all locations on the basketball court. Not stop the game clock with any external whistle noise.
Whistle	14	Requirements added for volume, frequency, and chemical safety.
Advertising boards	15	Padding indentation requirements and diagram added.
Advertising boards	15	Illuminance and refresh rate recommendations added for production purposes.
Spectator area	17	Load and durability test recommendations added.

# STANDARD QUALITY GLOBAL CONNECTION



5, route Suisse - P.O. Box 29  
1295 Mies  
Switzerland  
Tel.: +41 22 545 00 00  
Fax: +41 22 545 00 99