

Topeka Officials Association

TOA Newsletter #1 – 11/24/2007

Starting the Season on “The Right Foot:” As most of you will have no problem imagining, at least those who know me at all, I tend to be somewhat “economical” (OK, cheap) at times. For example, using the most expensive shampoo holds no excitement for me – why do I need to use shampoo like that on my motley mop? My wife recently purchased an Erbal Essence brand that promised to “DeGunkify” my hair – what there is of it. That’s just what I hope to do here – degunkify some of the rules and the enforcement of those rules.

Below are some of the issues the KSHSAA has listed as Points of Emphasis in their pre-season “announcements.” I have copied these issues directly from the KSHSAA web site. I’ll follow each of the points with what I hope are “common sense” ways of considering these issues.

Points of Emphasis – Legal Uniforms

The NFHS made legal uniforms a point of emphasis this year. While there has been no change in the uniform rule (other than white jerseys being required for high school varsity teams at home) the KSHSAA has been made aware that several schools have purchased illegal uniforms. School coaches and administrators must review the legal uniform requirements in the NFHS rule book. The requirements can also be accessed on the KSHSAA web site by going to kshsaa.org/activities/athletics/basketball/news & announcements and click on the icon 2007-08 uniform information.

The NFHS rules state a technical foul will be administered for every player wearing an illegal uniform. The KSHSAA has chosen to deviate from the NFHS requirement of a technical foul for each player entering the game with an illegal uniform. In varsity contests if an official determines a team has an illegal uniform the officials will administer one bench technical foul. The game will start with the non-offending team shooting two free throws (rather than 10) and the ball out of bounds. The head coach will lose their coaching box privilege for the game. The KSHSAA should be notified of any schools wearing illegal uniforms in varsity contests.

Prior to the season starting schools notifying the KSHSAA they have illegal uniforms may request a letter providing an exception to this penalty for one year. Coaches were instructed to send Francine Martin digital pictures of any uniforms they thought might be illegal. If a school has the exemption letter officials will not administer the bench technical foul to start the game. Schools must work with sporting goods companies and uniform manufacturers to get illegal uniforms replaced.

Coaches should carry a copy of the letter exempting them from the technical foul penalty and show it to officials if the officials believe the uniforms are illegal. **The legal uniform requirement applies to High School varsity teams only.** White uniforms must be worn at home for all varsity home teams; there is no exception to this rule. If a Varsity team does not wear a white uniform at home, a technical foul will be administered.

The rule concerning uniforms has been in place, as Fran mentioned, for four years. Can any of you in the “real” business world imagine receiving an edict as simple as this one – and then having to give a reprieve because the coaches, AD’s and administrators either did not want to adhere to the rules or just paid no attention to the rules. Four years to get it right!!!

At the first few Rules Meetings it was announced that Kansas was not adhering to the Federation rules of administering a Technical Foul to every participant in an illegal uniform. Instead, the KSHSAA decided one team technical would suffice.

Even that was too harsh for the poor dears – why should there be any penalty for not doing what they should have done over the past **four** years? So, if the schools ‘fess up’ to their sins of neglect and report themselves to the KSHSAA, there is no penalty – **as long as they have their letter from the KSHSAA, they are absolved of all their sins.**

By the way, as far as I am concerned, no letter from the KSHSAA, no “free pass!” “But, I forgot to bring my letter with me.” Tough, you had four years to correct the situation!

Another worrisome issue is that the latest edict (you can play with no penalty as long as you confess to the KSHSAA) was not announced until the later Rules Meetings. The only way to find out the latest is to go to: www.kshsaa.org – from there go to “Activities” – “Athletic” – “Basketball” – “Basketball Announcements” – “Weekly Newsletter.” On a humorous note, the site goes on to tell us that newsletters will be published on the site on the “first Monday of each week...” I don’t know about you, but **one** Monday a week is enough for me!

Please also note that the home team (varsity) **MUST** wear white uniforms!

Coaching Box

All coaches and officials were reminded that Kansas had adopted a six foot coaching box. This is a “fairness in coaching” rule and must be enforced consistently throughout the season. Coaches must use the box properly and not wander the sidelines during play – even if it is “just to give instruction”. Each coach is given the same distance to coach (six feet) once done instructing they are to be seated. Coaches are not to kneel on the sideline, this is a safety issue for players and officials.

Boy, this is a tough one! It has a longer life than the “Uniform” rule. I must confess two things: I have **never** seen this rule enforced unless there was an accompanying problem with the behavior of the coach. So often this issue can turn into a game of “cat and mouse.” It is certainly not prudent for an official spend a lot of his/her effort just watching to see where a coach is situated. It has been easy to conveniently “not see” where the coach is or what they are doing.

On the other hand, some coaches make it way too easy to “be seen.” They want the officials to know how upset they are with a situation on the court – they seem to be baiting officials.

One problem is the size of the box – 6 feet is two strides for most men. Make it the size of the NCAA box and we have a rule much more reasonable in nature and much easier to administer. As many of you know, I am an observer of officials on the women’s side for the Big 12 Conference. A lot of Federation rules and mechanics come directly from the NCAA women’s rule and mechanics. The NCAA has directed a much more strict policy concerning the coach’s box and the behavior of coaches – if a coach is a step out of the box and not otherwise creating a negative atmosphere, they are reminded to get where they belong. However, that is the extent of the “length of their rope.” Bench behavior has become decidedly better due to the rule and its enforcement. We’ll see what happens during conference play.

So, I am going to try and tighten up on this rule – we’ll see what ramifications there are in the early season. Discuss this issue during the pre-game conference – realize it is an issue of importance with the Federation and try to come to a consensus for the crew.

Timer & Scorer information –

The NFHS changed the replacement period for a disqualified player to 20 seconds. Along with that change all warning horns for replacement periods, time-outs and intermissions will be with 15 seconds remaining. The correct information for scorers and timers can be found on our web-site
kshsaa.org/activities/athletics/basketball/news&announcements/scorer&timer
information.

Be very aware of these changes and make sure these changes are discussed with the scorer and timer prior to the game – if one of these very important people tries to brush you off concerning these changes, hold your ground and discuss them anyway – “We’d (the officials) just want to make sure we are all on the same page!”

Good rules knowledge – coupled with good mechanics – good judgment and good common sense usually results in a good (correct) call!

FS