

## **2004- 2005 Basketball Pre-Game**

By: Frank Smysor

Official's Pre-Game Conference: Take the time to thoroughly discuss the material in the Mechanics Manual and the Rules Book. This meeting should begin one hour prior to tip-off.

Administrative Duties: Be on the floor at least 15 minutes before game time. If both head coaches are available at that time, hold the Pre-Game Meeting with the head coaches, captains (U1 has the home team and U2 has the visiting team), and all three officials. Be sure each head coach certifies his or her players are legally equipped and review the Points of Emphasis, including Sportsmanship! Following the meeting the officials will take their positions across the court from the scorer's table. At approximately 12:00, R will check the books – this allows for corrective action to be taken in a timely manner should there be clerical problems.

Review "Old" New Rules: 97-98: Keep players on the floor for 30-second time outs - correct positions for officials during time-outs - .3 seconds or less for "last second" shots; 98-99: Head coach can call time outs - substitutions on multiple free throws; 99-00: L handles all free throws - make sure calling officials lets L know the number to be shot; 00-01: Emphasis on rough play and sportsmanship - also emphasis on not having huddles prior to free throws; 01-02: Full time out signal; running the baseline; 60/40 split between L and C; new foul reporting area; 02-03: Swinging elbows without contact is a violation - an injured player may buy his/her way back in the game with a TO; 1<sup>st</sup> lane violation is the violation enforced. 03-04: Only six (2 offensive and four defensive) players on the lane for free throws - If the shooting team doesn't want to use their spaces, the defensive team can move into the vacated spaces - however, four remains the maximum. New positions at half time for the officials - new definition of team areas for timeouts - warning buzzer at 20 seconds in for disqualified players to be replaced. 04-05: Expanded the kicking rule to include intentionally striking the ball with any part of the leg or foot - Added that bench personnel will be charged with a flagrant technical foul for leaving the confines of the bench when a fight may break out.

During the Game: Primary coverage on a drive to the basket comes from C or T - from L if the drive originates in the paint. If L has a call, the fist should be in the air BUT await a call from C or T. If a call is not forthcoming from T or C, L can commit (The Dan and Dwight Rule!).

Communicate with one another: Excellent communication is essential for proper game management. We are hired to "manage" the game and we can do so much more efficiently if we communicate properly: Make eye contact on every throw in; Get every free thrower; get every fouler (The Frank Rule) every time; Be ready to help another member of the crew; Be ready to listen responsibly when issues are brought to you by other members of your crew.

Talk with players as appropriate: Do NOT substitute talking with players for taking care of business - but, do develop a rapport with the kids - it lets the players know you are there - and watching.

Talk with coaches as appropriate: Be respectful and do not dodge questions asked professionally and courteously. Keep conversations brief and to the point. Or, as Phil Laurie puts it, "Don't go often - Don't stay long." The more you talk, the less your words will mean!

"You can't shoot a squirrel from a galloping horse." Mechanically, get to your position and get still. You cannot see very well when you are running! Get where you are supposed to be and be prepared to make a call - don't anticipate - but be prepared. It is far more egregious to not be in position and guess at a call than it is to be where you are supposed to be and just miss a call.

Be Excellent Off-Ball and Dead-Ball Officials: Nothing is worse than having players mix it up when such actions could have been prevented by alert officials. Be Aware! This is very important to game control and management.

Mechanically, review court coverage; jump ball procedures; Throw-ins (remember the new rule for this year), Free Throws, Time Outs, and all other procedures. Be aware of how important our other members of the officiating crew (the bench crew) are to an expeditiously run game. We're all in this together!

Know three-person mechanics: Flex early and often to get better looks at the post play. T has about 60% of the floor and C has 40%; C, do not run away from pressure situations (help with the press) and remember you do have 40% after the ball crosses mid-court. Be aware that C may wish to initiate a flex if there is guard play that needs attention near mid-court. At L, do not allow either the offense or the defense to displace their opponents - displacement is the key!

Develop the ability to see the "Big Picture:" Be better people watchers and quit being ball watchers. Work your area of responsibility but be aware of what else is happening on the court. As was the case in two-person mechanics, if a fellow official sees an infraction out of his primary area of responsibility, but is 110% sure, he must make the call - for the good of the game and the good of the crew!

Have a "Patient" Whistle on Rebounds: Make sure that any contact on a rebound is of significance and puts one of the players at a disadvantage. Two kids contacting each other while going up for a rebound is not necessarily a foul. Have a "patient" whistle on this type of play, see the entire play, and call only when an advantage is gained and/or there is displacement.

Call Your Own Line(s) but be prepared to help. If you need help, ask. If a partner comes to you with a differing opinion than yours, it is your responsibility to at least listen - actually, it is your responsibility to listen carefully and thoughtfully.

Get the "Open Look!" Every move you make should be to avoid being straight-line - to get the "Open Look!"

After the Game: Leave the court together quickly and without delay - R, get eye contact with the official scorer before leaving the court. Review game situations and rules interpretations. Honestly review your performance and always graciously receive constructive criticism. Our goal is to get better every time out. While it is true that how coaches and administrators perceive your performance is important, the most important critic is yourself! Finally, leave the locker room clean!

Food for Thought:

The Seven C's of Good Officiating: Communication, Comportment, Consistency, Courage, Common Sense, and Calming Influence.

Basketball is an Imperfect Game  
Played by Imperfect Players  
Coached by Imperfect Coaches and  
Officiated by Imperfect Officials.

Officiating is as much a part of the game as  
Dribbling, shooting, and passing.

Therefore, the only thing that really matters is  
That the men and women officiating are people of integrity!  
Phil Laurie

Irv Brown:  
You aren't hired to be officious, overbearing,  
Authoritarian, or a tough guy. You are hired to enforce the rules,  
Tempered with reason.

Read the Fundamentals of Basketball in the Rules Book.

Accentuate Mechanics: Excellent Mechanics + Excellent Rules Knowledge + Excellent Judgment = an Excellent Chance to Get the Call Right!