



INTRO TO OFFICIATING HANDBOOK

Volume 2:

OFFICIATING MECHANICS





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Forward

As with the *Intro to Officiating Handbook – The Rules of Basketball*, the officiating mechanics presented here follow the FIBA prescribed mechanics. This document is a streamlined version of FIBA's Official Referees' Manual for Two Person Officiating, and is designed for the Junior Official. To obtain a complete version of the FIBA Officials' Mechanics, officials should visit the NBAABO website's Rules Corner at <http://nbaabo.homestead.com/RulesCorner.html>.

As Junior Officials progress and gain experience through their games within their minor associations, they may wish to become Certified Officials with the New Brunswick Association of Approved Officials (NBAABO). More information about taking this next step can be obtained from a member of the NBAABO Board of Directors, as listed at <http://nbaabo.homestead.com/NBAABOInfo.html>.

1 Introduction

The mechanics of officiating is a system designed to help an official obtain the best possible position, enabling decisions concerning infractions of the rules to be made correctly. They are also designed to ensure uniformity and consistency between officials regarding what calls are being made, and how said calls are being reported.

Common sense is a vital pre-requisite in a good official. A clear and thorough understanding of, not only the Official Basketball Rules, but also the spirit of the game, is absolutely essential.

2 Preparation before the game

2.3 Physical preparation

Prior to stepping onto the court, an official needs to prepare for the upcoming game. Regardless of the age and experience of the official, they should ensure they perform sufficient stretching, with various forms of exercises, to prevent, or at least reduce, the risk of injury. There are also psychological benefits, enabling the official to feel mentally alert and in good condition for the action ahead.

A high degree of self-motivation and enthusiasm is needed.

2.4 Pre-game duties

The referee shall select the game ball, a used one, and mark it distinctly. The game ball should be in good condition (ie no cuts or tears, round and not oval or exhibiting bulges). A ball should be filled with sufficient air such that when dropped from a height equivalent to the top of the official's head, the ball bounces up to the approximate height of the official's shoulder. A lower bounce indicates insufficient air in the ball; a higher bounce indicates too much air (and may result in few successful shots and thus a higher amount of rebound activity).

3 Beginning of a period

3.1 Administration before the beginning of a period

The referee should delay making the opening toss or administering any throw-in until he is certain that his partner is also ready for the game to begin/continue.



At the beginning of the first period, the umpire takes a position close to the centre line, at the sideline adjacent to the scorer's table. He is the free official. That means he is not involved in the administration of the jump ball, but ready to move ahead of the play when the ball is tapped.

The referee stands on the opposite side, facing the scorer's table, ready to step into the centre circle to make the opening toss for the beginning of the first period.

To administer the throw-in at the beginning of all other periods, the referee shall take a position at the centre line extended, opposite the scorer's table, on the backcourt side of the player taking the throw-in. The player taking the throw-in shall be positioned straddling the centre line

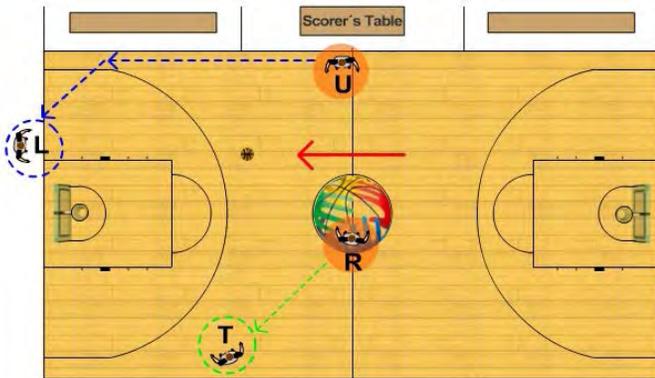
extended. The umpire shall take a position on the opposite sideline or baseline in the throw-in team's frontcourt so as to box-in all players.

For the movement of the referee and umpire following the throw-in that begins all other periods other than the first period see Art. 5.2.

3.2 Opening toss

As soon as the ball is first tapped, the umpire gives the time-in signal and moves in the direction of play, ahead of the ball to assume the lead position.

3.3 Movement of officials



When the ball is tapped to the free official's (ie the umpire's) left, he moves ahead of the play in the same direction as the ball and continues to the endline, establishing his position as the lead official.

The referee, who made the toss, maintains his position in the circle, observing the play. When the play has moved away from the mid-court area, he takes the trail position along the sideline.

Should the ball head to the right instead of the left, the two officials will react in the same manner, heading in the opposite direction.

Whenever there is a change of team control and a new direction of play, the two (2) officials must adjust. They maintain their responsibility for the same lines, with the trail official becoming the new lead official and the lead official the new trail official.

4 Positioning and responsibilities of officials

4.1 Officiating techniques

The eyes of the officials should constantly be roving, trying to cover the whole floor, always knowing where all ten (10) players are located.

Depending on the position of the ball, one (1) official must be looking at the action away from it. Whenever both officials blow their whistles simultaneously, the one who is nearest to the play will normally take the call.

There is no distinction between the referee and the umpire when it comes to taking decisions on fouls or violations. Younger or less experienced officials have just as much authority to take decisions as their veteran colleagues.

4.2 Division of responsibilities on the playing court



In order to achieve proper coverage, the two (2) officials should seek to obtain the best possible position to judge the play, using the system of mechanics contained in this manual as a guideline.

To simplify this, each half of the playing court has been divided into rectangles, numbered 1 to 6.

4.3 Trail official - positioning and responsibilities

The trail official should be behind the play. He should take a position slightly behind and to the left of the ball and approximately 3 – 5 m away.



Diagram 1

In Diagram 1, the ball is located in rectangle 1. The trail official is responsible for watching the play around the ball, in particular the player dribbling, shooting or passing the ball and the defensive player or players guarding him. When the ball is in this area of the playing court, the trail official has primary responsibility for on-the-ball coverage.



Diagram 2

In Diagram 2, with the ball in rectangle 2, the trail official again is responsible for the play around the ball.



Diagram 3

In Diagram 3, the ball is located in rectangle 3, to the trail official's far right. Again he has primary responsibility for on-the-ball coverage. In this situation, however, he will need to find the best possible position to cover the action while also not getting in the way of players in the area above the 3-point line.



Diagram 4

In Diagram 4, the ball is again located in rectangle 3, but now near to the three-point line. In the majority of cases the ball will penetrate into rectangles 4 or 5 on a shot, pass or dribble.

In order to anticipate the action, the trail official must anticipate a move toward his left in order to cover the play away from the ball.

He will sometimes need help from the lead official to cover three-point field goal attempts, especially when the defensive player blocks his angle of vision. If a three-point field goal attempt is taken by a player straddling the free-throw line extended (rectangle 3 and 4), the trail official shall take responsibility for the attempt.

The trail official does not have primary responsibility for the endline or sideline to his right, but there will be occasions when he is required to help his partner with the throw-in decision when the ball goes out-of-bounds.

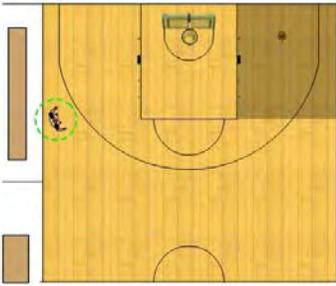


Diagram 5

With the ball in rectangle 4, in the corner furthest away to his right (Diagram 5), between the free-throw line extended and the endline, the trail official does not have responsibility for the ball and the play around it. It is his primary task to watch situations away from the ball. His main responsibility is the low post area on the weak side (border between rectangles 5 & 6 at the bottom of the key).



Diagram 6

The most important principle is that the trail official must penetrate to the free throw line extended (approximately) when the ball penetrates towards the basket or the endline on a pass, dribble or shot, in order to better find the spaces between the players.

In Diagram 6, the ball is in the restricted area (rectangle 5). This is the one occasion on which both officials will be looking at the play around the ball, especially in shooting situations. The trail official takes responsibility for the flight of the ball, watching to see whether or not it enters the basket, or makes contact with a basket support.

It is also his duty to watch for rebound situations, paying particular attention to the perimeter players who may be trying to jump “over the back” of a player in order to obtain the ball.



Diagram 7

In Diagram 7, the ball is located in rectangle 6. The trail official is primarily responsible for the ball, especially when a shot for a field goal is attempted. However, if the ball goes to the basket, especially along the endline, the lead official will assume responsibility for the play around the ball.

The trail official is also responsible for giving the direction of play for the throw-in following the ball going out-of-bounds nearest to the sideline on his left.

It is vitally important to have close cooperation between the two (2) officials at all times.



Diagram 8

The trail official is responsible for on-the-ball coverage when the ball is located in the shaded areas (Diagram 8). The dark shaded area indicates the area of shared responsibility with the lead official.



The primary duties for the trail official include:

- Field goal attempts, including judging whether the horn has sounded prior to ball release at the end of a period or when the twenty-four (24) second buzzer sounds.
- Rebounding situations, especially over-the-back situations.
- Low post area, especially on weak side (away from the ball).
- Fouls away from lead official.
- Travelling violations (trail official has the best angle of vision).

Remember the principles of mechanics:

1. The trail official must always move when the ball moves. (don't get caught standing still)
2. Box-in, that is, keep all the players between the two (2) officials.
3. Penetrate when the ball penetrates below the free-throw line extended on a shot, pass or dribble (don't get caught too far away from the play)
4. Look for the spaces between the players.

4.4 Trail official - practical advice

- When the play is moving up the playing court, keep slightly behind and generally to the left of the ball, approximately three (3) to five (5) m away.
- You are responsible for the sideline to your left, and the centre line (the possibility of the ball being returned from the frontcourt to the backcourt).
- If the ball is brought up the playing court on your far right and the dribbler is closely guarded, you must go as far as it is necessary to cover the player properly, and then return to the normal trail position as soon as the situation permits.
- Whenever the ball penetrates towards the endline or the basket on a shot, dribble or pass, you must also penetrate (but not beyond the free-throw line extended). This will enable you to help your partner, especially with players coming over the backs of opponents in order to obtain a rebound illegally.
- When your partner looks for assistance on an out-of-bounds play, be prepared to give it immediately.
- In transition from trail official to lead official, do not turn your head away from the play and look down the playing court. You must keep your eyes focused on the play and the players at all times by looking over your shoulder.

4.5 Lead official - positioning and responsibilities

The lead official should be, under normal circumstances, ahead of the play. He must get down the playing court as quickly as possible, allowing the play to come towards him. The lead official must always be on the move.

Having reached the endline, he will normally move between the three-point line to his left and no further than the far edge of the restricted area to his right. There is no need to move beyond these parameters.

For most situations, the officials must use the "boxing-in" principle, always having all ten (10) players between them. The officials do not necessarily have to be diagonally opposite.

Throughout the following three illustrations, which show the ball in rectangles 1, 2 and 3, between the centre line and the free-throw line extended, the lead official "boxes" the players in, and is primarily responsible for off-the-ball coverage.

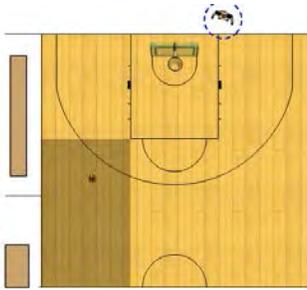


Diagram 9

In Diagram 9, the ball is in rectangle 1. The lead official positions himself so that the ten (10) players are between him and his partner. His main responsibility is the play away from the ball.

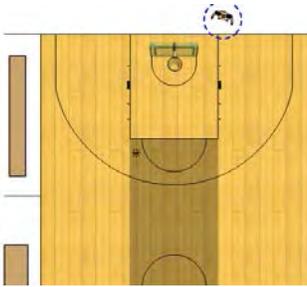


Diagram 10

In Diagram 10, the ball is located in rectangle 2. Again the lead official has primary responsibility for off-the-ball coverage. By keeping his hips open to the play (feet in line with the endline), he will be able to anticipate any possible movement of the ball towards the basket.

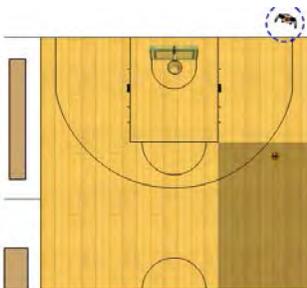


Diagram 11

When the ball is in rectangle 3 (Diagram 11), the lead official again takes off-the-ball coverage. He should always know where the ball is in order to give help, when necessary, to his partner on a three-point field goal attempt. There is no need to move beyond the three-point line to his left. With the ball in rectangle 3, the lead official watches the players in the low post area.

In Diagram 12, the ball is located in rectangle 4. The lead official now positions himself with his hips open to the play (playing court) and is responsible for play immediately around the ball.



Diagram 12

He should not move to his left beyond the three-point line. From here he will still be in a good position to make judgmental decisions when the ball goes out-of-bounds near the sideline to his left. He will also be able to indicate to his partner when a three-point field goal is attempted from this area. Although he is responsible for on-the-ball coverage, his secondary duty with the ball in rectangle 4 is to watch the players in the low post area on the side of the ball.

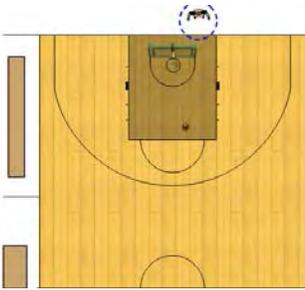


Diagram 13

When the ball moves into the restricted area, rectangle 5, (Diagram 13), the lead official watches the play directly around the ball.

As a guideline, he should watch the defensive player in all shooting or one-on-one situations.

As the lead official and the closer to the play, he is in the best possible position to make judgmental decisions on all contact situations involving the shooter and the defensive player guarding him. It is not his duty to watch the flight of the ball.

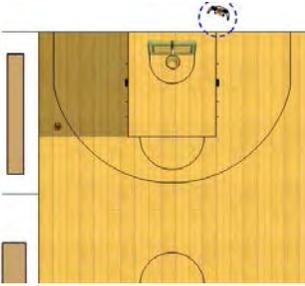


Diagram 14

When the ball is in the outer area of rectangle 6, (Diagram 14), the lead official has the primary task for off-the-ball coverage.

Should the ball move inside the two-point field goal area in the lower region of rectangle 6, the lead official moves over to cover the play around the ball, but always keeps his hips open to the play (playing court). He does not need to move beyond the edge of the restricted area to his right.

The lead official is responsible for on-the-ball coverage when the ball is located in rectangles 4 and 5. He is also responsible for rectangle 6 when the ball is in the low post area or the player is moving towards the basket on a drive.



The lead official is responsible for on-the-ball coverage when the ball is located in the shaded areas (Diagram 15). The dark shaded area indicates the area of shared responsibility with the trail official.

The primary duties for the lead official include:

- Play under the basket.
- Fouls away from trail official.
- Drive to the basket on lead's side of the playing court.

Remember the principles of mechanics:

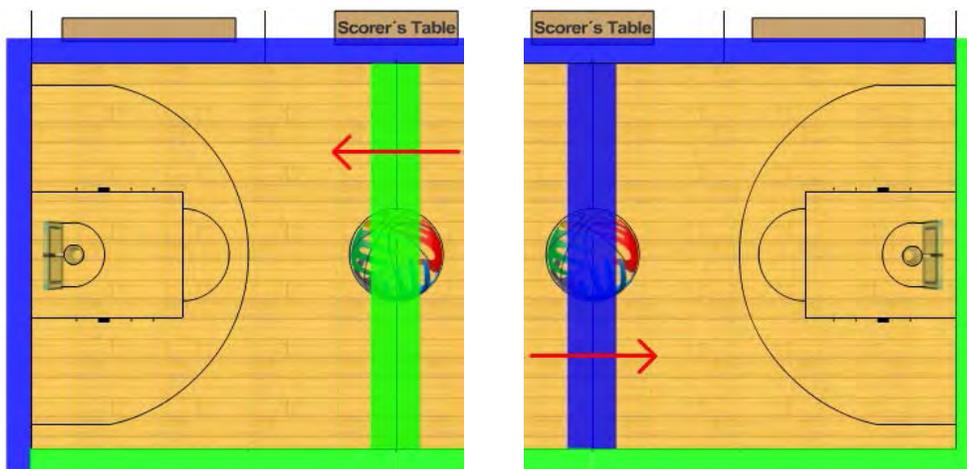
1. Always move when the ball moves.
2. Box-in all the players between the officials' field of vision.
3. Look for the spaces between the players.
4. Step back from the endline to get a wider angle of vision.

4.6 Lead official - practical advice

- You must get down the playing court as quickly as possible, allowing the play to come towards you.
- Always know where the ball is, even when you are primarily watching the play away from the ball.
- You are responsible for the endline and the sideline to your left.
- Pay particular attention to the post play and the amount of physical contact you will tolerate. Any rough play is your responsibility and you should penalise it.
- Try to take a “deep endline” position (2 metres if possible) to get the best possible angle. A wider angle means better vision and, in turn, better decisions. To achieve this, you must always be on the move.
- When your partner looks for assistance on an out-of-bounds play, be prepared to give it immediately.
- In the event of a pressing defence when three (3) or more defensive players are in their opponents’ backcourt, you must assist the trail official with his coverage of the play. In this situation, delay your progress up the playing court in order to help.

5 Out-of-bounds and throw-in situations

5.1 Responsibility for the lines



Generally, primary responsibility for the out-of-bounds decisions are as follows:

Lead official - endline and sideline to his left.

Trail official - centre line and sideline to his left.

The other official should not normally interfere in decisions, unless his partner needs assistance.

5.2 Throw-ins

When the ball goes out-of-bounds:

1. The official responsible for that sideline or endline shall blow his whistle once and, simultaneously, raise his hand straight in the air, fingers together, to stop the game clock
2. He will clearly indicate the direction of play by pointing in that direction.
3. He will direct the player to take the throw-in to the place where the throw-in shall be administered.



4. The official will hand the ball to the player taking the throw-in and verify that he does not take more than one (1) normal step from the designated place
5. Following a successful field goal or successful last or only free throw, the official shall normally not touch the ball.
6. The official shall give the time-in signal, using a chopping motion with the hand, when the ball first touches or is touched by a player on the playing court following the throw-in

6 Shooting situations

6.1 Flight of the ball

The trail official is primarily responsible for the flight of the ball. He must determine if the ball has entered the basket by signalling it to the scorer's table. The lead official concentrates on situations away from the ball.

However, it is always the official calling the foul (lead or trail) who will decide whether a basket should count.

Regardless of which official called a foul, it is absolutely vital that the trail official watches the flight of the ball to the basket, as well as the players involved with the foul situation.

6.3 Three-point field goal attempts

The trail official is responsible for signaling all three-point field goal attempts.

Decided that the field goal attempt is for three (3) points, the trail official will raise one (1) arm with three (3) pointed fingers: the thumb, index and middle finger.

If the three-point field goal attempt is successful, the trail official will confirm that three (3) points have been scored by raising both arms with three (3) pointed fingers on each hand.

Not all three-point field goal attempts will be seen clearly by the trail official. In these situations, the lead official will raise one (1) arm with three (3) pointed fingers. This signal must be acknowledged and repeated by the trail official. If the three-point field goal attempt is successful, only the trail official makes the "successful" signal.

7 Signals and Procedures

7.1 Signals

It is essential that the officials indicate clearly to everyone involved in the game, including the spectators, what has taken place.

- The official FIBA signals only must be used.
- A loud, sharp whistle should be used. It should be blown once only and crisply for any violation or any foul.
- Signals should be kept sharp and concise.
- Signals to stop the game clock must be very clear. Officials must stop the game clock with a straight arm in the air, with a clenched fist for a foul, an open palm with fingers together for a violation or with the signal for a technical, unsportsmanlike or disqualifying foul, or jump ball situation.
- For observing closely guarded player and throw-in execution (ie a 5-second count), and eight seconds the official responsible for the play shall use the visible count (Official's signal no. 14).



7.2 Violations

Whenever a violation occurs, the official responsible for the play must:

1. Blow the whistle once and simultaneously stop the game clock with his arm raised straight (not a bent arm action), open palm and fingers closed together.
2. Indicate clearly the type of the violation.
3. Indicate, using the same arm, the direction of play that is to follow.

7.3 Fouls

Whenever a foul occurs, the official responsible for the play must:

1. Blow the whistle once and simultaneously stop the game clock with the arm raised straight (not a bent arm action) and a clenched fist.
2. Run towards the scorer's table and stop, taking a position so that the scorer has a clear and unobstructed view of the official, approximately six (6) to eight (8) metres from the scorer's table.
3. Report all signals while standing still. Signal very clearly and slowly the team colour and number of the player who has committed the foul.
4. Next, indicate the type of the foul.
5. Complete the communication procedure by indicating the number of free throws or the direction of play that is to follow and run to the next position.

7.4 Switching after fouls

Under normal circumstances, the officials calling a foul shall always go to the "trail" position for the inbounds play.

8 Free-throw Situations

8.1 Trail official

The trail official moves to a position where the free-throw line extended intersects the three-point line, always facing the scorer's table.

Once the lead official has finished signaling to the players the number of free throws to be attempted, the trail official shall signal the number of the free throws by raising his arm(s).

He is responsible for:

1. Watching the shooter.
2. Watching the players along the opposite side of the restricted area and the players above the 3-point line
3. Watching the flight of the ball and the ball on the ring.
4. Confirming if the free throw was successful.

8.2 Lead official

The lead official takes a position under the basket with the ball in his hands and administers all the free throws from that position.

When the players are lined up correctly, he enters the restricted area and signals to the players the number of free throws to be attempted. He then looks to the scorer's table (for any late subs or time outs), after which he bounce passes the ball to the free-throw shooter. He is responsible for collecting the ball after each free throw.

After each free throw, he takes a position away from the basket with one (1) foot on either side of the line extended from the restricted area and behind the endline holding his arms down.

After the ball leaves the hand of the free-throw shooter on the last or only free throw, he should take a step to the right in order to get a better view of the rebounding action.

He is responsible for:

1. Watching the players along the opposite side of the restricted area.
2. Looking for contact situations and possible violations of the free throw provisions by players entering the restricted area before the ball leaves the hand of the free throw shooter.

8 Official's Signals

Game clock signals

STOP THE CLOCK



Open palm

STOP THE CLOCK – FOUL



One clenched fist

START THE CLOCK



Chop with hand

Substitution and Time-out

SUBSTITUTION



Cross forearms

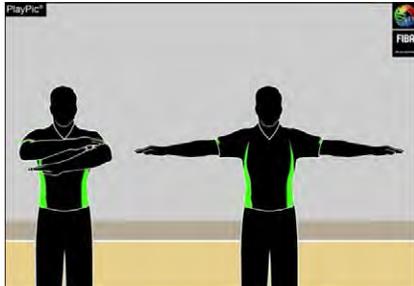
CHARGED TIME-OUT



Form T, show index finger

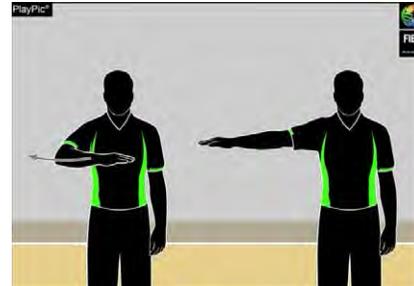
Informative

CANCEL SCORE, CANCEL PLAY



Scissor-like action with arms across the chest

VISIBLE COUNT



Counting while moving the palm

DIRECTION OF PLAY



Point in direction of play

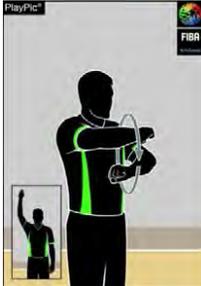
HELD/JUMP BALL



Thumbs up, then point direction

Violations

TRAVELLING



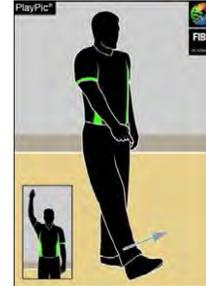
Rotate fists

DOUBLE DRIBBLING



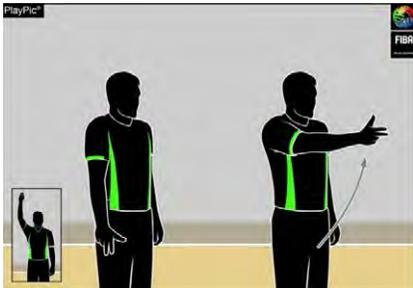
Patting motion with palm

DELIBERATE FOOT BALL



Point to the foot

3 SECONDS



Arm extended, show 3 fingers

5 SECONDS



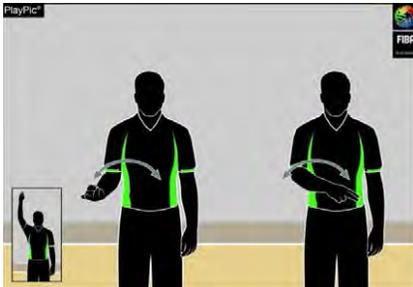
Show 5 fingers

8 SECONDS



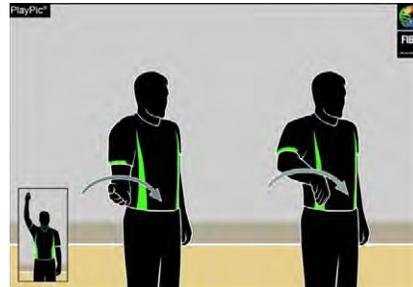
Show 8 fingers

BALL RETURNED TO BACKCOURT



Wave arm front of body

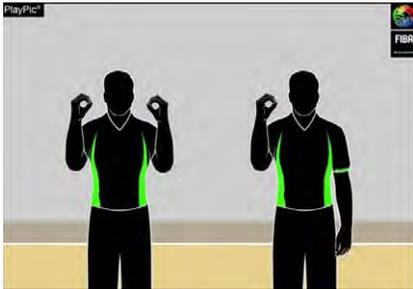
ILLEGAL DRIBBLE: CARRYING THE BALL



Half rotation with palm

Player Numbers

No. 00 and 0



Both hands show number 0

Right hand shows number 0

No. 1 – 5



Right hand shows number 1 to 5

No. 6 - 10



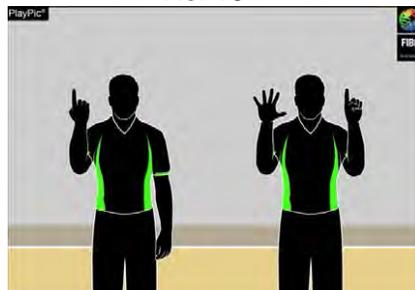
Right hand shows 5
left hand shows 1 to 5

No. 11 – 15



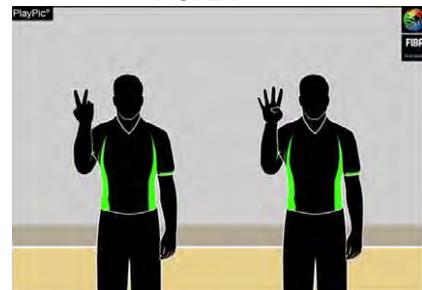
Right hand shows fist,
left hand shows 1 to 5

No. 16



Reverse hand and show 1
then open hands and show 6

No. 24



Reverse hand and show 2
then open hand and show 4

Type of Fouls

HOLDING



Grasp wrist downward

BLOCKING /
ILLEGAL SCREEN



Both hands on hips

PUSHING



Imitate push

HANDCHECKING



Grab palm and forward
Motion

ILLEGAL USE OF HANDS



Strike wrist

CHARGING



Clenched fist

EXCESSIVE SWINGING
OF ELBOW



Swing elbow

HIT TO THE HEAD



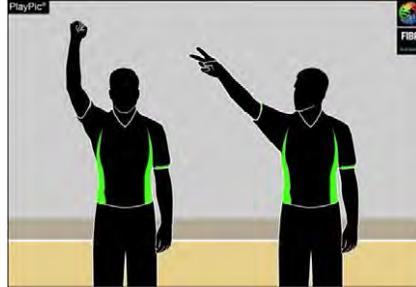
Imitate the contact

FOUL BY TEAM IN CONTROL OF THE BALL



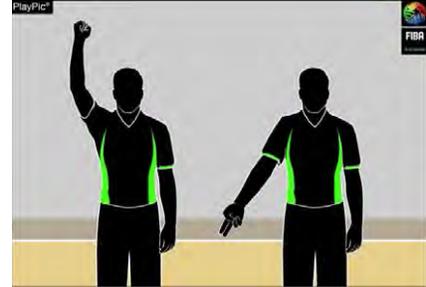
Point clenched fist toward basket of offending team

**strike open palm
FOUL ON THE ACT OF SHOOTING**



One arm with clenched fist, then indicate numbers of free throws

**backwards
to the head
FOUL NOT ON THE ACT OF SHOOTING**



One arm with clenched fist, then pointing to the floor

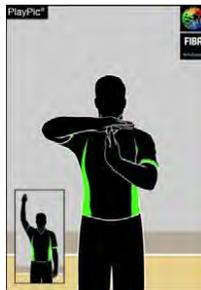
Special Fouls

DOUBLE FOUL



Wave clenched fists on both hands

TECHNICAL FOUL



Form T, showing palms

UNSPORTSMANLIKE FOUL



Grasp wrist upward

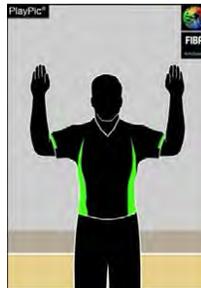
Adminstrating Free Throws – Trail Official

1 FREE THROW



Index finger

2 FREE THROWS



Fingers together on both hands

3 FREE THROWS



3 fingers extended on both hands