



# Post Play Express

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## NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

*Greetings to all. This the third issue of Post Play Express for 2010-2011. I normally do not complain, but following my appeal to National Council members, to our FIBA cardholders who had the opportunity to travel abroad in recent months, and to members at large to provide articles for the newsletter, the response has been somewhat short of overwhelming.*

*So please get to your keyboards and let the CABO membership read about and enjoy your thoughts and experiences!*

## ABOUT THE NATIONAL RULES EXAM

BY Paul Deshaies

CABO National Interpreter

At this time, some of you may have already written the national exam for 2010-2011. For the rest of you, the date is probably fast approaching.

The issue of the environment in which the exam is administered must be raised in the context of the National Officials Certification Program (NOCP). One of the objectives of the NOCP is to standardize the certification levels so that a Level 1 official in Manitoba is comparable to a Level 1 official in New Brunswick, British Columbia, and all the other provinces. The same goes for Levels 2 to 4. Rule knowledge is a basic criterion for certification. The national exam is one of the tools geared at measuring this important aspect. In addition to the written exam, the NOCP requires rule knowledge to be evaluated in an applied setting, on the floor, in a real game environment. Both evaluations, theory and real life application are required and complementary. Since the exam is part of the requirements at the different national certification levels, it must be administered under the same circumstances everywhere across the country. To be

recognized nationally, an official must write the exam in a closed-book supervised environment.

Many provinces apply the requirement for all their officials. It is not the case in certain areas. Some people may argue that this cannot be controlled. Well, this is the rule. We are basketball officials. As such, we are the guardians of the integrity of our sport. We have a moral duty to adhere to the rules in our every action. If we choose to bypass the rules ourselves, we display a level of morality that is far below what is expected from us by those who put their trust in our objectivity and honesty. Not abiding by the rules is cheating. It falls on the shoulders of the leadership at all levels (national, provincial, and local) and ultimately of each individual to see that the rules are followed. If one wants to be a nationally certified official (from Level 1 to Level 5), there are steps to take and requirements to fulfill. The rule exam is one of them. It is a test of acquired knowledge. When taken with an open book or in a group setting, or as a take-home, the exam is no longer a test, it becomes a learning tool. There is nothing wrong with using the exam as a learning device, but only after it has fulfilled its first purpose as a true test of rule knowledge.

Every year, I receive comments about the exam, about the pertinence of some questions, the wording of others, and the overall difficulty of the exam. Last year in particular, there were voices who criticized the exam in no ambiguous terms. The subject was brought up at the AGM in September. It was agreed that the process of composing the exam should be modified. I asked the provincial interpreters to provide me with questions (at least ten of them) that they felt would be adequate for the exam. Eight of the ten interpreters answered that call. Then, for a large part using the questions submitted by the interpreters, a draft of the exam was prepared and e-mailed to them. They were asked to provide me with feedback. A few did. The end result is what you saw recently or will see in the near future.

The national exam is aimed at the whole span of refereeing backgrounds across the country, from the beginners to the 30-year plus veterans and to the FIBA-carded officials, from Level 1 to Level 5. Within that framework, the exam must not be expected to deal exclusively with commonly seen situations or very basic rules. There must be room for some less likely occurrences. There must be a minimal number of questions that present a challenge for the most knowledgeable and experienced. Beginners must not expect to achieve a high score the first or second time around, although some young people do very well, very early. This is why the NOCP requires different passing grades for different levels of certification. A Level 1 official who scores 35/50 (70%) on the exam has achieved a national passing grade, while 40/50 (80%) is required for certifying at Level 2, and 43/50 (86%) at Levels 3 and 4. Success is therefore commensurate with the level of experience.

If you write the exam under the prescribed circumstances and do not reach the passing mark for your level of certification, don't let that discourage you. Rather, let it be a signal that you must work harder at acquiring better knowledge of the rules. To become a strong and superior official, you must control what is under your capability to control. Rule knowledge is one of those factors that are entirely under your control. There is nothing more damaging to an official's reputation and, by extension, to the whole community of officials than someone making an incorrect decision for not knowing what should be done by rule in any given situation.

If you were successful on the exam at your level, let that be an incentive to continue studying the rules. Feeling comfortable with all the rules and having no doubt about one's ability to make the correct decision in any game situation do go a long way in enhancing one's credibility and self-confidence as an official.

I would certainly welcome reactions to this article. Don't hesitate to make your voice heard whether you agree or not. I can't wait to read your comments.

## A BIT OF A CHALLENGE

As national interpreter, I receive e-mails on an almost daily basis, mostly from provincial interpreters, but also from individual members. Here are some of the questions that were submitted to me in the past few weeks. Answers are provided on the next page. Obviously, most have to do with the rule changes. Let's see how you do on these!

1. A1 releases the ball on a try for goal. While the ball is in the air, the 24-second device sounds. After the signal sounds, B2 fouls A4. The ball then misses the ring. What is the correct procedure, particularly as it relates to the 24-second device?
2. A4 has the ball for his final free throw. B4 enters the restricted area before the ball is released. A4 completes his free throw attempt and is successful, but commits a violation by stepping over the free throw line before the ball reaches the basket. What is the correct procedure?
3. In the absence of floor markings that clearly highlight the 'under the basket area', should we follow the intention of the rule, and penalize the defence, or must we charge a foul on an offensive player for contacting a defender in legal guarding position?
4. Team A has the ball for a mid-court line throw-in after an unsportsmanlike foul. Player A3 receives the throw-in with his left foot completely on the floor in the frontcourt and his right foot completely off the floor. A3 then puts his right foot down on the floor in the back court. Is this a legal play and should the 8 second count begin?
5. Are T-shirts allowed (same dominant colour)? A compression sleeve is allowed, but is a complete compression shirt with long sleeves allowed?
6. Is it possible to have an unsportsmanlike foul before the game clock starts on the jump ball?
7. A1 is dribbling the ball in Team A's backcourt and the official has counted 5 seconds of the 8-second count when he notices that the game clock and the 24-second device have not started. The official interrupts the game. He then instructs the timekeeper to take 5 seconds off the game clock. When play resumes with a Team A throw-in in their backcourt, shall a new 8-second count be granted and shall the 24-second device be set at 24?
8. A player throwing the ball off the backboard constitutes the start of a dribble. If a player catches a pass and then decides to throw the ball off the backboard and continue dribbling after the ball hits the backboard without catching the ball, is this legal? (ie - the player tosses the ball off the backboard, the ball hits the ground and the player continues a dribble.) I can find no reason for this play to be illegal. Am I correct?
9. A1's try for goal is in the air when B2 fouls A2 in the restricted area under Team B's basket. The try is successful. What is the correct procedure?
10. With 0:00.3 second left in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, A1 shoots a final free throw. While the ball is in the basket B1 touches the ball. Does the game clock start? Under the same circumstances, if A2 touches the ball, does the game clock start?

Answers :

1. A 24-second violation has occurred. B2's foul shall be disregarded unless technical, unsportsmanlike or disqualifying. The violation is for not being successful in attempting a try that enters the basket or touches the ring. I would compare this to Example 3 of the Interpretations, under Article 29, Statement 1, which says:

*"A4 shoots for a field goal at the end of a twenty-four (24) second period. The ball is legally blocked by B4 and then the twenty-four (24) second clock signal sounds. After the signal B4 fouls A4.*

**Interpretation:** *A twenty-four (24) second violation has occurred. B4's foul shall be disregarded unless technical, unsportsmanlike or disqualifying."*

2. The free throw does not count. We have violations by both teams. This is a jump ball situation. Alternating possession. Throw-in at the free throw line extended.
3. At the national levels (CIS' CCAA), the no-charge rule shall not apply until the proper markings are on the floor. What is done at the provincial or local levels should be consistent with this.
4. Yes.
5. Nationally, T-shirts are not allowed at levels higher than high school. A compression shirt with long sleeves is allowed as long as it is the same color as the jersey.
6. The start of the clock no longer determines the end of the pre-game interval of play. The interval ends when the ball is tossed by the referee. If a foul occurs before the toss, it is a foul during an interval of play and therefore a technical foul. If it occurs after the toss (even before it is tapped), it is a foul during playing time even if the game clock has not yet started.
7. Yes. In Article 28.1.3, there are five reasons not to grant a new 8-second count. Stopping the play for a technical reason is not one of the five. And Article 29.2.1 states: *"If the game is stopped by an official: ...for any valid reason not connected with either team, possession of the ball shall be awarded to the same team that previously had control of the ball. If the throw-in is administered in the backcourt, the twenty-four (24) second clock shall be reset to twenty-four (24) seconds"*.
8. Yes.
9. Count the basket. Award Team A a throw-in from behind the endline in their frontcourt. Since Team A has satisfied the requirements of attempting a try and scoring within the prescribed time, Team A gets a 24-second reset.
10. No in both cases. The free throw is successful. The clock does not start until the throw-in by Team B is completed after the free throw.

## **THE REF WHO PUT THE GAME FIRST**

I am an International basketball referee and have had the good fortune to referee at the Olympic and World Championship level in recent years. In climbing the ranks, I was taught very early on that we as referees should put the game before ourselves, that we should ensure that we provide a level playing field for the athletes and that we keep in mind that any game we referee is the most important event in the life of an athlete, coach and parent on that particular day. I often remind myself of those notions prior to officiating a game, but never has this been more clear to me than when I was recently helping coach one of my son's minor hockey games and I met for the first time a young referee that demonstrated these qualities through his actions.

Despite the fact that over the years I, as a referee, have at times become rather intolerant of coaches who question obvious calls or no-calls, players who react negatively to decisions that are apparent to everyone, and parents who complain about the outcome of games based on one or two calls, I must admit that I am at times guilty of the same offences while coaching and watching my son's hockey games. While at no time would I admit to being a crazy and irrational hockey dad, there are times when I do indeed allow my emotions to get the better of me and I become frustrated with the officiating. At the same time, I remind myself that the referees in PeeWee hockey are often teenagers, they are learning their craft and we are in fact fortunate to even have referees for these 11 year old games. Having said that, I am also troubled at times when I see young referees with their sleeves pulled over their hands, not skating to get into position and demonstrating body language that suggests they do not want to be there. Just as my faith in the art of officiating was starting to be undermined, a young referee from Kamloops by the name of Brent Hazel came along and renewed my enthusiasm.

A few Sundays ago we were scheduled to play a league game against one of our arch rivals. Our previous games were very close and both teams were very eager and excited to meet again. As usual, both teams focused on their pre-game preparations in and out of the dressing room and went to their respective benches to wait for the referees. At the same time, one of the coaches on our teams went to the referees' room to notify them that we were ready to start the game. Much to our horror, he returned to advise that there were no referees assigned to our game due to a miscommunication for which no one was to blame. There were three referees from the previous game but all three had prior commitments and were unable to stay for our game.

The panic set in as our opponent and their parents had driven 2 hours for this clash and it would be extremely disappointing to all not to be able to play the game. Accordingly, we all started to put our head's together and started

to make calls to the league director, the referee assignor and anyone else that may be able to help. We also approached the one referee from the game before (Brent Hazel), and asked him if it was at all possible to stay for our game. He said he had a prior personal commitment and he really didn't want to let anyone down. We completely understood. However, he offered to call his supervisor and see if he could arrange for other referees. We thanked him for his assistance and waited outside the room.

Both teams were now on the ice warming up and word had made its way to the stands that we didn't have any referees for the game. We were embarrassed that the other team had travelled on a Sunday to play and we might not be able to play. We also knew that the kids would be devastated. As our frustration grew, I decided to follow up with Brent to see how things were progressing. He was on the phone with his assignor and he put him on speakerphone. The assignor quite rightly pointed out that it was next to impossible to get referees on such short notice and that by the time they arrived our ice time would be over. However, to his credit, he said he would try to contact some officials.

Having been in this position before as a referee, I was fairly certain that our game would be cancelled. I left the referee's room extremely disappointed for the kids of both teams and explained the situation to all those involved. Afterward, I entered the referees' room to thank Brent for all of his efforts when I noticed that he had put his referees' gear back on and was tying up his skates. I asked him what he was doing and he said "I'll do the game – no problem". I reminded him of his prior commitment and he said he would make it work. Needless to say, I sprinted out of the referees' room to let both teams and parents know our game was going to proceed, and proceed it did.

I could finish this story by saying that Brent refereed by himself and did a good job. However, more needs to be said. Not only did Brent referee the game on his own, he concentrated and worked harder than any referee (present company included) I've seen in a very long time. He was truly doing the work of 3 officials by skating into position (as referee and linesmen), anticipating the play, being decisive and still demonstrating an outstanding feel for the game. In fact, there were a number of bang-bang potential offside calls both for and against our team and he nailed each and every one of them. The game also started to become overly physical and he made calls that were appropriate both for and against us. Moreover, he said he would let us play stop-time notwithstanding his time pressures. Simply put, he showed that he cared about the game, the players, the coaches and the parents.

We ended up losing the game, but I can say it was one of the most memorable games in sport in which I've been involved. This was not due to the tremendous effort of the players, the strategy of the coaches or the intensity of the crowd. Rather, because a young referee decided to put his own life on hold, sacrifice his own time and truly saved the game by not only officiating a game he didn't need to, but also working the game as if it was Game 7 of the Stanley Cup Finals.

It should also be said that I've subsequently learned that Brent is a rather accomplished young referee who officiates junior hockey. This is even more impressive in that he could have easily determined that working a PeeWee game was "below him". Brent Hazel reminded me why I am proud to be a referee and why we owe it to him, the athletes, the coaches and the parents to always put the game first. Thanks Brent.

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COME ON!

A LITTLE EFFORT!

SEND YOUR ARTICLES TO

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