MEMORANDUM

February 7, 2018

VIA EMAIL

TO: NCAA Divisions I, II and III Coordinators of Men’s Basketball Officials.

FROM: J.D. Collins
      National Coordinator of Men’s Basketball Officiating.

      Art Hyland
      NCAA Men’s Basketball Secretary-Rules Editor.

SUBJECT: Bulletin No. 4 – February 5, 2018 Teleconference Follow-Up.

Because of the importance of this information, we appreciate your consideration and effort in providing this bulletin directly to all officials and head coaches in your conference. We believe that providing this information to each institution demonstrates a continuing commitment to maintaining and improving the officiating in every game. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

This information will also be available on the ‘Coordinator’s Meeting’ section of the men’s basketball officiating website at www.ncaambb.arbitersports.com

1. After talking to the Division I Coordinators this week, it is obvious that the dog days of February came early. The past week and a half have been hard. Coaches are wearing you guys out. Everybody thinks they are in the hunt and are taking a piece of you as a result. Stick to your guns, continue pressing on the directive to reduce physicality and when official disregard the directives – my hope is that you are calling it out and providing accountability. Thank you all for your efforts thus far to consistently enforce the rules as written and the directive to reduce physicality.

   Nationally, it appears to me that we are not calling three to four physicality plays per game. Two to three in the post and we are beginning to allow defenders to arm bar the ball handlers especially at the elbows when the offense turns the corner. Please reinforce the message to your officials that they must re-commit to calling the directive to reduce physicality in all six key areas!

   Officials are addressing the directive to reduce physicality in order to create freedom of movement in the six key areas.

   I would like to highlight the two areas where I believe we need additional focus:

   a. Handchecking/body bumping the ball handler – Rule 10.1.4. When the offensive player is turning the corner, we cannot allow the defender to hand check or arm bar the offense.

   b. Physical post play – calling the first displacement foul. We need to improve our efforts in calling offensive players for straight-arm ward-offs and defensive players for swim strokes. In addition, when the offensive player bumps the defender while trying to back him down and displaces him,
call the first foul. Defaulting to the no call will only encourage physical play. At times, we are getting the third foul. First the offense bumps the defender, next we allow the defender to bump back and then we are calling the third foul on the play. We must begin to call the first foul! Bottom line – call the first foul.

c. The rules committee also gave a directive to give additional focus to the traveling, hook and hold plays, wide screens and the strict enforcement of the coaches’ box and bench decorum.

We must begin to do better in the following two areas:

a. Traveling – We are still struggling with traveling. Officials MUST find the pivot foot. Officials should officiate active on-ball match-ups from the floor up. This will allow the official to find the pivot and then officiate contact.

b. Strict enforcement of the coaches’ box and bench decorum. Officials MUST engage this process and use all of their communication skills to require the coaches comply with the rules. There are times when a coach just needs to be addressed and reminded of where he is located. We must tighten up this type of situation. With coaches fighting harder than ever, now is the time for us to require coaches to comply with the coaching box and bench decorum rules.

We have made significant strides in many areas. We are at the point in the season where officials must engage and not default to the no-call.

2. Relative to mechanics and signaling, I am asking the coordinators of officials to continue to reinforce three things:

a. Positioning.

b. Positioning.

c. Positioning.

We are past the point in the season of listing the same issues over and over again. Your officials know what they are supposed to be doing relative to mechanics and signals. Please reinforce the message: Get to a good initial starting position, move to obtain better angles, close down on all shot attempts and be mobile!

3. Again, as I spoke to the Division I coordinators this week there were reoccurring plays that I would like to comment on that need our attention:

a. We are struggling with the offensive players backing the defense down by bumping him. If the first bump causes displacement – call the foul!

b. We are also struggling with the head-bob. Offensive guards use it out front to draw a 10.1.4 foul and defensive players use it in the post to draw a foul. Be aware of the head-bob and in the post, if the defenders head goes back before his body – it is a flop!
c. Cylinder plays: A reminder to officials to slow down and process the play. Officials should be looking for violations of the vertical cylinder by the defense and call the fouls early. This will prevent many elbow plays from happening. The thought process should be: the defense needs to back off. I feel it necessary to remind officials that proper positioning will assist our accuracy on cylinder plays.

d. Monitor reviews of cylinder plays: When officials are at the monitor to review a cylinder play, they should spend an equal amount of time looking at the defense to determine if he was legal and at the offense to determine if he was legal. We all know we are there looking for a flagrant foul – process both sides.

e. Our trail and center must see the shooters all the way to the floor. Many defensive players are walking into shooter and/or contacting them prior to them coming back down to the floor. If a defender appears to be within his POV and then moves forward into a shooter, it is a foul!

f. We have had an increase in offensive shooters seeking out defenders by kicking their legs out. If the defender is not going to make contact with the shooter and the shooter seeks out the defender, it is either a no call or if egregious enough and offensive foul.

g. Please remind your officials that on shot clock expiration plays when the ball goes in the basket, the officials must stop play immediately if they are going to review the release at the monitor. After the ball has been inbounded is too late to go to the monitor.

h. Please remind your officials to only point to the restricted area arc when they are calling a foul because the player is in the RA. We are having too many officials pointing to the arc when the secondary defender is not in the RA. If the play is a blocking foul regardless of the restricted area – don’t point to the RA. It is just a blocking foul.

i. While on the subject of the restricted area. Officials are overusing the “legally walled up signal.” The tape doesn’t lie. Only use the “legally walled up signal” when the defender is in fact legal!

j. Officials have done a good job of making sure all screens are legal. We are now having defenders seek out the screener. If the screener is legal, we cannot penalize him.

k. Art covered the throw-in spot issue on this call earlier, covered it on the November 20, 2017 Coordinators conference call and covered it on the January 8, 2018 Coordinators conference call. The following to help reinforce the issue:

(1) The four designated throw-in spots only apply when the offensive team has a throw-in in their front court.

(2) When the offensive team creates a foul or violation (including causing the ball to be out of bounds) in their backcourt – officials should use the new rule – going “new school.”

(3) When the offensive team creates a foul or violation (including causing the ball to be out of bounds) in their front court – officials should use the old rule – going “old school.”
Please reinforce all of these issues with your officials. The games are too important for us to allow slippage.

4. Art Hyland, Secretary-Rules Editor comments.

a. THROW-INS (Rule 7-3.2) – Prior discussions of this topic occur in Arbiter postings dated 11/1/2017, 11/11/2017 and 11/21/2017. Please review these comments and the following note:

   (1) When a player-control foul or violation (including causing the ball to be out of bounds) is committed by the offense in the backcourt, the ball is awarded to the defense (now becomes the offense in their front court) at the closest of the four spots using the line of demarcation.

   (2) When a player-control foul or violation (including causing the ball to be out of bounds) is committed by the offense in their front court, the ball is awarded to the defense (now becomes the offense in their backcourt) at the closest spot nearest to where the foul or violation occurred.

b. CYLINDER PLAYS (Rule 4-39.1) - The intention of the cylinder rule is to encourage freedom of movement by giving the offensive player the opportunity to make a “normal basketball move”. Officials should understand that this is the same philosophy behind the directives given by the rules committee to the National Coordinator regarding handchecking, illegal screens, rough post play and other points of concern which you have been hearing about. While officials have made significant progress in the enforcement of these plays, there are still some officials who are hesitant to incorporate the intent of the rules committee into the enforcement of the cylinder rule.

   In some instances, officials make an immediate reaction to elbow contact in a cylinder play by calling a foul on the offense and then using the monitor to rescind the foul. However, by rule, the official may not assess the foul to the defense as part of this review. So, the result is that coaches, fans and media are upset that there is an un-penalized elbow foul. More importantly, there is no reinforcement of the intent of the rule with players and coaches which is to make the defense back off to permit the offense to begin a “normal basketball move”. These mistakes do not serve our game well.

   When these plays occur, the official must:

   (1) Blow whistle and post a foul. DO NOT GIVE ANY TYPE OF OFFENSIVE FOUL SIGNAL!

   (2) Think defense first.

   (3) Mentally process the play quickly. Did the defense invade the offensive player’s cylinder? Did the offensive player attempt a “normal basketball play”? Was a straddle involved? Were the offensive player’s arms more vertical than horizontal?

   (4) If the answer is “yes to all of these questions, the foul is on the defense.
Having said all of the above, calling a 10-1.4. foul when there is contact by the defense after invading the cylinder of the offensive player may eliminate the necessity of having to address a swinging of the elbow foul.

c. LEGAL GUARDING POSITION (Rule 4-17.4 and .6) - The rules for establishing initial legal guarding position differ significantly from those which permit a player to maintain legal guarding position after first establishing initial legal position.

Per 4-17.4 a defensive player must have two feet on the floor and face his opponent in order to establish initial legal guarding position. Time and distance is not a factor.

Once initial legal guarding position has been established, 4-17.6 describes what a player may do to maintain legal guarding position. Specifically, the defender is not required to face his opponent. He may move laterally or obliquely provided he does not move toward the offensive player and cause contact. Officials must recognize the differences in these two guarding rules and apply them consistently.

d. A.R. 194 - This case play involves a defender who has been drawn across the end line on a throw-in. In 2 of the case play, while the player is out of bounds, he jumps toward the court and touches the throw-in before it crosses the boundary line. The ruling in 2 states that “This is not a technical foul because the was being passed to a player on the playing court and not to a teammate who was out of bounds”…

While this remains true for the play situations in A.R. 194, please note that Rule 9-4.3 prohibits an opponent of the thrower-in from having any part of their person beyond the inside plane of the boundary line before the ball has crossed the boundary line. If this occurs a warning is required. Thereafter, assess a Class B technical foul.

Given this rule, if thrower-in A1 makes a sharp-angled pass from behind the end line toward the opposite sideline to a teammate who is inbounds, and a Team B player reaches through the end line and touches the throw-in before it crosses the boundary line, Team B should be given a warning per 9-4.3 followed by a Class B technical if it occurs again.

5. General Comments/Questions and Answers.

- Encourage your officials to make it about the student-athletes. It is an honor and privilege to officiate college basketball and we need to do our very best to facilitate a great experience for the student-athletes.

- In late March or early April, the NCAA will be posting the NCAA Division II National Coordinator of Men’s Basketball Officiating position. Be thinking of good candidates. I encourage you to share this information with interested parties.