CLARIFICATIONS AND COMMENTS

The “cylinder rule” became part of the verticality rule (Rule 4-38) for the main purpose of helping to rebalance the rules between offense and defense by creating freedom of movement for an offensive player to attempt a normal basketball move. Please note the following with regard to this rule:

1. The cylinder rule only increases the space normally allowed in the front of the player where the cylinder extends to the hands of a player when the elbows are bent.

2. On the sides and back of the player, the diameter of the cylinder begins at the player’s hips on the side and buttocks at the back. Therefore, a defender may come as close to an offensive player short of contact on the side or back of the offensive player. Most fouls committed by the defense on the side or back would be those included in Rule 10-1.4 and 10-1.5 which would not require the use of the new signal for invasion of the cylinder.

3. The cylinder rule applies equally to the offense and defense, and all players are at risk of being assessed with a foul when they invade another player’s cylinder.

4. While most cylinder plays which involve elbow contact occur on the perimeter, the rule applies anywhere on the court including during post play. However, also note the exception to the cylinder rule which allows a defensive player to place one arm bar on a post player. (Rule 10-1.5.d)

5. Given the clear purpose of the “cylinder rule”, it is imperative that officials adjudicate these plays by 1) raising an arm with a fist (signal for foul); 2) quickly determining which player invaded the other’s cylinder space and 3) determining if the offensive player was attempting to make a normal basketball move by moving the ball from side to side either above the shoulders or below the waist. While it is possible for the offense to still commit a player control or flagrant foul, most of the elbow contacts which result from these types of plays are defensive fouls even though the contact may be severe. Officials should not default to an offensive foul as that will be detrimental to the overall attempt to change the culture of playing defense under these new rules.

PLAY SITUATIONS

The following play situations are intended to clarify the use of Instant Replay following certain cylinder plays and also to clarify if the Restricted Area rules are in effect on certain plays:

Play 1. An official calls a common foul on B1 for handchecking A1. The official blows his whistle but cannot stop play before A1 attempts a normal basketball play by moving the ball from side to side above his shoulders with his arms more vertical than horizontal. A1 clips B1 in the face with his elbow. The officials want to use Instant Replay to review the play. What are the official’s options?
RULING - The official has called a common foul on B1. That foul cannot be reversed by the use of instant replay. However, the officials may use instant replay to determine if A1 committed a flagrant foul for the elbow contact. If, after review, the officials determine that the foul was not flagrant, no foul can be assessed against A1. Enforce the penalty against B1 (shoot free throws if in the bonus) or resume play with a throw-in to Team A at a designated spot nearest to where the foul occurred. The elbow contact by A1 on B1 shall be considered incidental (Rule 11-1.4.a and 11-2.1.d.2). If the officials determine that the contact was flagrant, the fouls by B1 and A1 become a double foul. Administer the free throws for B1’s common foul (if required) with no players on the lane line followed by the free throws for the flagrant foul also with no players on the lane line. Play shall be resumed with a throw-in by Team A at the point of interruption (Rule 4-15.2.b, 11-2.1.d.2 and 10-1 PENALTY f). 

Play 2. An official calls a player control foul on A1 for swinging his elbows and contacting B1 who is defending A1 in the front. The officials elect to use instant replay to determine if the elbow contact by A1 was flagrant. After review, the officials determine that B1 was invading A1’s cylinder at the time of the contact and that A1 was attempting a normal basketball move with his arms more vertical than horizontal when the elbow contact occurred. What are the official’s options? 

RULING - The officials may use instant replay to determine if a flagrant foul occurred. After review, the officials may determine if the foul was flagrant, or if the player control foul was the correct call or if, by indisputable evidence, there was no foul. If the officials determine that the foul should have been assessed against B1 because of B1 invading the cylinder of A1 when the contact occurred, the foul call against A1 should be rescinded. However, no common foul may be assessed against B1 by the use of instant replay. Play shall resume with a throw-in by A1 where the stoppage of play occurred to review the act with no adjustment to either the game clock or shot clock (Rule 11-2.1.d.1, 11-1.4.a and 4-27.1.a).

Play 3. B1 and B2 are defending against a 3 on 2 fast break by Team A. Around the top of the key, A1 passes to A2 who is on the wing and B2 then commits to defending A2 by establishing a legal guarding position outside the RA on A2 (2 feet on the floor and facing his opponent). B2 defends A2 all the way to the basket and takes a charge in the RA.

RULING – B2 is initially a secondary defender because of the outnumbering fast break situation. However, B2 established legal guarding position on A2 outside the RA. Therefore, he is no longer a secondary defender and may defend A2 all the way to the basket including in the RA. In this situation, the RA rule is not in effect and block/charge plays should be adjudicated accordingly (Rule 4-35.4, 4-17.4, 4-17.7, and 10-1.14).