Basketball Points of Emphasis - 2026-27

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Uniforms – Education-Based Activities

Proper uniform standards remain an essential component of education-based basketball, reinforcing school identity, team unity, and respect for the game. Coaches and players share responsibility for ensuring uniforms are worn properly and in full compliance with NFHS rules. The traditional designation of white jerseys for the home team and dark jerseys for the visiting team continues to support proper game administration, alignment with NFHS rules, providing accuracy for officials, scorers, and spectators.

Uniforms must be worn as intended by rule at all times. Jerseys designed to be tucked in must remain properly tucked (front and back). Players not in compliance shall be directed to leave the game until corrected, as outlined in Rule 3-3-4. To prevent avoidable interruptions, coaches are expected to proactively address uniform compliance prior to competition.

Timing Corrections and Officials' Counts

Accurate timing is essential to game integrity and competitive balance. Officials and table personnel must work collaboratively to ensure timing responsibilities are properly managed throughout the contest. When timing mistakes or equipment issues occur, officials may utilize visible or silent counts to maintain fairness and game consistency.

Officials’ counts are not limited to rule-mandated situations such as backcourt, closely guarded, or three-second counts. Counts may also be used to address timing mistakes or administrative issues impacting play. Strong communication between officials and the scorer’s table is essential in these situations.

Bench Decorum, Sportsmanship and Professional Conduct

Sportsmanship is a core expectation of education-based basketball and directly supports the mission of interscholastic athletics. Behavior on the court and in the stands should reflect the same respect, integrity, and responsibility expected in the classroom. Positive sportsmanship enhances the experience for all participants while reinforcing NFHS values.

Education-based athletics require consistent professionalism, respect, and sportsmanship from coaches, players, and officials. Coaches on the bench serve as primary role models, and their behavior directly influences the tone and educational value of the contest. The head coach is responsible for all

bench personnel and communication with officials, while assistant coaches must remain composed and supportive in a professional manner.

Unsporting behavior, excessive reactions, prolonged dissent, and inappropriate comments undermine the integrity of the game. Taunting—defined as actions or remarks intended to embarrass, ridicule, or demean an opponent—has no place in high school basketball and must be addressed promptly and consistently per NFHS rules. Maintaining professionalism and appropriate bench decorum ensures respect for opponents, officials, and the game itself.

Physical Play and Illegal Contact

Basketball remains a physical game; however, unnecessary or illegal contact that creates disadvantage or safety concerns is not consistent with NFHS rules or education-based athletics. Officials, coaches, and players must collectively ensure legal play is distinguished from illegal physical advantage. Illegal contact includes hand checking, displacement, push-offs using the controlling arm, and other actions that restrict freedom of movement or violate legal guarding principles. Unnecessary roughness or overly aggressive play must be penalized to maintain safety and game control. Post play requires special attention, including illegal use of two hands on the back, forearm displacement, or dislodging a legally positioned opponent. Consistent enforcement supports fairness, safety, and proper game flow.

Traveling, Continuous Motion and Legal Player Movement

Proper enforcement of traveling and continuous motion rules is increasingly important due to the evolving athletic nature of offensive play. Officials must have a strong understanding of footwork, pivot rules, and legal movement to properly judge plays without penalizing legitimate skill-based actions. Moves such as euro-steps, spin moves, and jump stops are legal when executed within the limits of establishing and maintaining a pivot foot. However, dragging a pivot foot, taking extra steps, or failing to properly maintain a pivot foot when ending a dribble constitutes traveling. Officials must also accurately identify when continuous motion applies. If an opponent fouls after a player has started a try or tap for field goal, the player is permitted to complete the customary arm movement, and if pivoting or stepping when fouled, may complete the usual foot or body movement in any activity while holding the ball. Continuous motion ends when the ball is clearly in flight. Strong rule knowledge ensures fairness, consistency, and game flow.

Player Equipment – Tooth and Mouth Protectors
Tooth and mouth protectors must be properly designed and worn as intended for protective purposes. Custom-fitted or molded protectors are required; however, they must not include attachments or features unrelated to protection. Decorative or non-protective additions are prohibited due to safety concerns for both the wearer and other participants. Proper equipment compliance is essential to maintaining a safe and fair competitive environment.

Authenticating Mark
The NFHS Authenticating Mark identifies approved inflated and non-inflated game balls (and pucks where applicable) used in interscholastic competition under NFHS playing rules. All game balls must display this mark to ensure conformity with established standards. Proper equipment use is essential to competitive equity and game integrity.
Administrators, coaches, and officials share responsibility for ensuring compliance. Non-conforming equipment must be reported to the state association following the contest. Coaches should reinforce proper equipment requirements during pre-game certification and throughout the season, while officials must remain vigilant in identifying and reporting non-compliant equipment.