



POST PLAY EXPRESS

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Monthly Newsletter of the Canadian Association of Basketball Officials

Acknowledgement of the Work of Michele O’Keefe – Outgoing President and CEO of Canada Basketball

By Morgan Munroe, President of CABO, Chairman of the CBOC

On May 23rd Michele O’Keefe, CEO and President of Canada Basketball, announced that she is leaving her position on June 30th to become the Associate Director, Athletics & Recreation, at Niagara College.

The members of CABO want to acknowledge and thank Michele for her support of officiating in this country. The strong relationship between CB and CABO is in large part due to the personal trust that provincial boards as well as the National Council have in Michele. She has worked tirelessly to build the trust that now exists between CB and the officials. There have been challenges to be sure, but she has never allowed these challenges to become an impediment to progress. Rather they have been used as opportunities for both groups to learn more about how and what the other side does. We all share a goal of making our sport better and without question Michele has been instrumental in making this a reality.

Michele, our most sincere thanks and we wish you well in your new position.

YEAR END MUSINGS

By Mike McPhee – Ontario Interpreter

As I was searching past issues, so as not to repeat myself, I read Martha's intro from last June which spoke about the difficulty of writing an article when the officiating year is essentially over for the most part. What do we say for example, that people can reflect upon and keep until the newsletter appears again in the fall?

One writes these articles to inform and hopefully modify what happens on the court. At the end of a very busy season, after running around trying to cover games, and dealing with the demands of different levels and termination tournaments, will an official take the time to reflect and perhaps work to change things for next year? I hope that is the case.

Many things can arise that take an official's mind off the basics, often called the "balls and strikes" of officiating. In rule change years, it is the new stuff that demands focus and sometimes that focus forgets the long standing non-changes. In some game administration levels, it becomes a "philosophy" that "needs to be applied", which in turn contradicts what the rules say. And then some big-ticket item happens that affects athletic competition across the board and leads to concerns outside of the normal job we have to do.

In Ontario, a new provincial law about concussions and what needs to be done by coaches, officials and sports organizations, showed up just as the spring championship season was beginning. That became a focus and a worry that occupied the back of the mind going into any games that were done, making contact situations open for second guessing at certain levels.

It's the middle issue that I want to address however (once again), because it's something that has been covered before and yet still is an issue, particularly in profile games.

We, as officials, seem to be inconsistent in how we view rules with some being weighted differently than others. There also appears to be a tendency, that when we officiate certain skill levels, rules are set aside so as not to "interrupt the game". However, it is our duty as officials to stop play with our whistle when a rule violation occurs. That's why the rule book is full of details about what must or must not happen in regard to particular actions, as well as the penalties for violation of those same guidelines.

It is curious, how many officials dramatically blow the whistle and emphatically signal when a player with the ball touches a line he is not supposed to (out of bounds, or back court) and yet, when players are inside the restricted area for too long or cross a lane line or arc on a free throw, don't seem to have seen the violation happen. Worse still is that they do see it and don't rule that it is important. I witnessed these types of issues a number of times, both as an observer/evaluator and as a member of a crew, in so called profile level games.

Why are officials told or believe that 3 seconds, or free throw violations aren't important? Understanding the purpose of the 3-second rule can help us to realize its importance. Any offensive player in the restricted area is less than 6 metres from the basket, so they have a greater chance of scoring when they shoot, and a greater chance of securing a rebound on a shot by a teammate. To allow them to stay there in excess of the limits gives the offense an advantage. In addition to those chances, the defensive team can't ignore a player who is there but must guard them. At the very least it takes the guard's attention away from the offensive flow and makes them less able to react to it. If the guard does concentrate on what is happening away from the player she is responsible for, then in order to legally guard that player, she must re-establish position which again gives an advantage to the offensive player. The more serious result of not dealing with 3 seconds is that the player forced to watch/guard the offensive player who is violating, starts to push them away from the proximity to the basket, which, when it escalates, makes us blow the whistle and charge the defensive player with a foul that our lack of enforcement has allowed to happen. Enforcing this rule reduces rough play; not enforcing it leads to more.

The free-throw situation mentioned above is another area where "philosophy" is leading to officiating that creates inequality. We have no problem blowing the whistle for violations by the shooter, but there seems to be a "don't interrupt" tendency when lane line or arc violations occur. Back in 2006 there was a play in the FIBA casebook that contained the following information:

After the ball has been placed at the disposal of A4 but before the ball is released on the shot, a) a Team A player b) a Team B player c) both a Team A player and a Team B player enter(s) the restricted area. If the free throw is successful, the entry into the restricted area shall be ignored.

In a) If the attempt is not successful, a violation shall be called and the ball awarded to team B at the free throw line extended. In b) if the attempt is not successful a replacement free throw shall be awarded to A4. In c) if the attempt is not successful a double violation has occurred and a jump ball situation results. An alternating possession throw in shall be awarded to the team entitled on the baseline.

It would be nice if that was still in writing so that people would review it more often. Very frequently however, we as officials are not ruling well on case A. There is a behaviour by officials that suggests that if the defensive team gets the rebound, then we let play continue so as not to "interrupt the game". A local board official sent me some scenarios about this because he was concerned that no one considered how the defensive, non-violating team could be disadvantaged by not enforcing the rule. I will share three of them where the defensive team secures the rebound and the officials allow play to continue.

- A) A1 is shooting penalty when on the last throw the shot is missed. As A1 releases the ball on the shot A3 crosses the 3-point line. B1 secures the rebound and immediately is checked by A4, the ball comes loose and A5 scores two points. The officials rule that no violation has occurred. The ability of A4 to create the loose ball would not have occurred if the violation had been penalized. Team B has been seriously disadvantaged.
- B) A1 is shooting penalty when on the last free throw the shot is missed. Before A1 releases the ball on the shot A3 enters the restricted area. B1 secures the rebound and is immediately tied up by A2 and a held ball is called. Team A has the possession arrow. Officials award Team A the ball. There should have been

a violation called on A3 and Team B should have been awarded a throw in on the sideline (free throw line extended.) The “let them play” philosophy has given Team A the ball in the most advantageous spot on the court.

- C) There are 6 seconds remaining in a 2-point game. Team B is losing. A1 is shooting penalty when on the last free throw the shot is missed. As A1 releases the ball on the shot A5 crosses the 3-point line from outside. B1 secures the rebound and the officials allow play to continue. Team A presses and as a result B3 is forced to take a shot from the centre court area, which misses. Team A wins the game. There should have been a violation called on A5 and Team B should have been awarded a throw-in on the sideline (free throw line extended.) Allowing play to continue placed team B at a very serious disadvantage. Team B was entitled (because of the violation) to a time-out or substitutions or both. If the time-out was taken then the ball would have been moved to the front court for the ensuing throw-in with 6 seconds remaining in the game. The desire “not to call something that affects the outcome” has cost Team B a chance to win which they owned BY RULE.

We are taught and repeatedly talk about advantage/disadvantage, based on this rule.

47.3 When deciding on a personal contact or violation, the officials shall, in each instance, have regard to and weigh up the following fundamental principles:

- The spirit and intent of the rules and the need to uphold the integrity of the game.*
- Consistency in application of the concept of 'advantage/disadvantage'. The officials should not seek to interrupt the flow of the game unnecessarily in order to penalise incidental personal contact which does not give the player responsible an advantage nor place his opponent at a disadvantage.*

What we seem to be forgetting however is that 47.3 refers to contact, not “everything”. In a contact situation a player can recover or continue to “play on” after contact that did not terminate his playing action. A team cannot recover if we let opponents play out of bounds, go into the back court when not allowed, live in the lane, run with the ball, violate ball handling rules or free throws.

So, let’s reflect on this point when we prepare ourselves and those we train for the new season in the fall. If we do that, then my hope from paragraph two, can be realized.

FACTORS OF SUCCESS IN OFFICIATING

By Paul Deshaies, Editor of Post Play Express

Success in officiating



Editor's note:

Special thanks to all the individuals who submitted articles to be published in Post Play Express this season. Without you, this newsletter could not exist and it is the reading members who would be disadvantaged. Post Play Express takes time-out until next September.

*Have a really great
summer !*

