



November 17, 2020

Dear NCAA Division I Directors of Athletics and Head Women's Basketball Coaches:

This year's women's basketball rules will emphasize the importance of good sportsmanship throughout the regular season and championship. The Division I Women's Basketball Oversight Committee wants to emphasize its clear expectations regarding sportsmanship:

The highest level of respect and integrity, which embody good sportsmanship, must be exhibited throughout the 2020-21 Division I Women's Basketball season and championship.

We have a mutual responsibility to serve as leaders and role models in this regard. Basketball is a competitive game which, by its very nature, may lead to adversarial relationships between opponents. However, the relationship should not foster a negative interaction. Individuals should employ a behavior that respects the skill level of an opponent and should not create an atmosphere that negatively influences the attitude of the game.

The Women's Basketball Oversight Committee expects all game officials to strictly and consistently enforce bench decorum and strictly enforce the coaching box rules. As outlined in Rule 10, Sections 3, 4 and Appendix III of the 2019-20 and 2020-21 Women's Basketball Rules Book, the committee expects the following:

For the coaching box:

- The coaching box rule shall be enforced, and technical fouls called for interactions.
- Coaches shall remain in the coaching box or, during a timeout or the intermission following the first and third periods, inside the bench area.
- After a warning, a technical foul shall be assessed when a coach is clearly and completely outside the coaching box, or during a timeout or the intermission following the first and third periods, outside the bench area (except when permitted by rule).

For behavior of coaches:

- Coaches engaging in minor conduct infractions should receive a warning from officials. A subsequent violation results in a technical foul.
- Any blatant misconduct, while inside or outside the coaching box, shall be properly penalized **without warning** with a technical foul.

For assistant coaches and other bench personnel:

- All bench personnel, except the head coach, are required to be seated on the bench while the ball is live, except to react spontaneously to an outstanding play. They are then to immediately return to sitting on the bench.

- When assistant coaches or bench personnel violate bench decorum rules in a minor way, the official shall inform the head coach and request that the coach handle the situation. **This is an official warning. Any further violation by bench personnel shall result in a technical foul assessed to the offender.**
- Any egregious (blatant) conduct violations by assistant coaches or bench personnel need no warning and **shall immediately result in a technical foul.**

Examples of misconduct by student-athletes and/or coaches include, but are not limited to:

- Comments directed at or referring to any game official that question the integrity of an official (for example, repeated references to the number of fouls called against each team; suggesting an official is “cheating” a team, making negative comments to an official’s partners about a call/no-call/warning made by an official, etc.).
- Profane, vulgar, threatening or derogatory remarks or personal comments relating to race, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability directed at or referring to any game official or opposing player/bench personnel.
- Prolonged, negative responses to a call/no-call, which is disrespectful or unprofessional and includes, but is not limited to, thrashing the arms in disgust, emphatically using an officiating signal to illustrate disbelief over a no-call, dramatizing contact by re-enacting the play, or running or jumping in disbelief over a call/no-call.
- A negative response to a call/no-call including, but not limited to, approaching and/or charging an official in a hostile, aggressive or otherwise threatening manner; emphatically removing one’s coat in response to a call/ no-call; or throwing equipment or clothing onto the floor.
- Continual and prolonged criticism during a game regarding any incident after receiving a warning from an official.
- Taunting, baiting, ridiculing, finger-pointing, trash talking or inappropriate gestures (obscene, provoking and intimidating).

When these behaviors are witnessed by fans in attendance, or by those watching a broadcast, such actions also damage the game – which is a concern to all that support the principles of sportsmanship. All stakeholders must agree that behavior exhibited by coaches, student-athletes and institutional personnel should portray the highest ideals of higher education and intercollegiate athletics.

In closing, please note that the Women’s Basketball Oversight Committee will monitor decorum throughout the season and into the championship. With your leadership, we can demonstrate our personal and collective commitment to ensuring that the season will continue to be a great experience for student-athletes and fans alike.

We fully anticipate and appreciate your cooperation to further enhance sportsmanship throughout the regular season and championship.

Lisa Campos
Chair, Women’s Basketball Oversight Committee

This email was sent to DI Women's Basketball Conference Commissioners and conference administrators, DI Women's Basketball Committee and DI Women's Basketball Oversight Committee based on contact information in the NCAA Directory. This email was also sent to the NCAA Women's Basketball Rules Committee and selected NCAA staff members.

