



MEMORANDUM

January 15, 2019

VIA EMAIL

To: Men's Basketball Conference Commissioners, Directors of Athletics, Head Coaches and Registered Officials.

From: Tad Boyle, Chair
NCAA Men's Basketball Rules Committee

Jeff Hathaway, Chair
NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Oversight Committee

Jim Delany, Chair
NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Competition Committee.

SUBJECT: NCAA Men's Basketball Direction of the Game Update.

Following the 2014-15 season, the NCAA Men's Basketball Rules Committee and NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Oversight Committee began a review to identify potential rules changes and officiating initiatives to improve the pace of play, better balance offense with defense and reduce the physicality in the sport. The goal of the changes was to keep men's college basketball competitive, contemporary, fair and moving towards an even more appealing game for student-athletes, coaches and fans.

One of the moving forces behind the desire to review the rules and the enforcement of the rules stemmed from the analysis of certain data obtained from men's basketball games. For instance, NCAA men's Division I basketball teams averaged 76 points per game during the 1990-91 season. Over the course of the next 25 years, the per game average slowly, but steadily, dropped by nine points to 67 points per game during the 2014-15 season, the lowest since the 1980-81 season. During the same time period, increasingly physical play was permitted evidenced by the lowest fouls per game average and the lowest field goal percentage rates in decades.

In an attempt to reverse these alarming trends in our game, the rules committee adopted several changes including:

1. Shortening the shot-clock from 35 to 30 seconds;
2. Requiring teams to be ready for play at the second horn following timeouts and replacement of players after disqualification or injury;

National Collegiate Athletic Association

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3. Reducing the time on a shot-clock reset from 30 to 20 seconds when a personal or technical is committed by the defense and the ball is to be inbounded by the offense in the front court; and
4. Reducing the number of 30 second coach-called timeouts from four to three per team, per game.

Officiating Initiatives:

In addition to the rules changes implemented over the past few seasons, the rules committee directed officials to enforce current rules pertaining to a number of areas including hand checking/body bumping, post play, rebounding, freedom of movement for cutters, offensive initiated contact and screening. To fully accomplish the goals of enhancing freedom of movement and reducing physicality, there was a recognition that there may be a period (especially at the beginning of each season) when the flow of the game and the number of fouls called may actually get worse. Indeed, we did see an increase in the number of fouls called in the 2015-16 and 2016-17 seasons as players and coaches adjusted. However, the average fouls per game and free throws attempted per game have now moderated to pre-change rates for an even more appealing and competitive game.

Over the course of the past three seasons, steady progress has been made. The points per game average has increased by six points to 73 points per game (+9%) since the 2014-15 season. The 2017-18 season saw the highest points per game average and best field goal percentage rate (44.4%) in almost 25 years. The pace of play has increased as well with 7% more possessions per game. The flow of the game has also improved with a significant decrease in the average length of a game from slightly over 2 hours to 1 hour and 56 minutes. However, all committees reviewing the rules remain concerned that rules changes allowing more video reviews (in an effort to get the call correct) continue to be a challenge that warrants further discussion and study.

Potential Major Rules Changes:

To assist in achieving these goals, the Division I Men's Basketball Competition Committee was charged with reviewing four specific potential rules changes:

- Distance of three-point line: Extend the distance of the current three-point line (20 feet, 9 inches) by approximately 1 foot, 5 inches making the line the same distance as the three-point line (22 feet, 1¾ inches) used in international basketball (to potentially create more spacing).
- Width of the lane: Widen the lane from 12' to 16' making it consistent with the width of the lane used by the NBA and in international basketball (to potentially reduce physicality and create more spacing/freedom of movement).
- Four-quarter format: Use four 10-minute quarters instead of two 20-minute halves to be consistent with international men's basketball and college women's basketball.

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- Shot-clock reset after offensive rebounds: Reset the shot clock to 20 seconds after an offensive rebound instead of 30 seconds (to potentially increase the number of possessions).

During the past 18 months, the Competition Committee has taken advantage of the two-year rule cycle to review potential changes. The committee has conducted several teleconferences and met in person at the past two Men's Final Fours. In addition, the committee has reviewed the results of various surveys and experimented with several of the potential rules changes during the 2018 Men's NIT. These findings have been shared with the conference commissioners, National Association of Basketball Coaches and the Men's Basketball Oversight Committee.

Moving forward, all three of the aforementioned committees will continue to consider these four changes and others with a final decision likely being made in the spring of 2019. A listing of the current rosters for each committee is available below.

[NCAA Men's Basketball Rules Committee](#)

[NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Oversight Committee](#)

[NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Oversight Competition Committee](#)

Please know that the committees referenced above, along with feedback from coaches, officials, student-athletes, fans and media partners, will continue to identify ways to enhance the student-athlete experience and preserve the traditions of the sport - while at the same time remain nimble enough to adjust both the rules and officiating directives to ensure the sport's popularity for years to come. To assist in gathering feedback, the rules committee will issue its annual rules survey to all head coaches, conference commissioners, athletics directors and officials in February 2019. We encourage all to participate in the survey.

In closing, we hope you agree that men's college basketball is in a better place than it was prior to the 2014-15 season. We also realize there is continued work to be done and ask that you continue to support these efforts.

BT:bh

cc: NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Oversight Committee
NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Oversight Competition Committee
NCAA Men's Basketball Rules Committee
Selected NCAA Staff Members