



WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

2020-21 NCAA Women's Basketball

RULE INTERPRETATIONS/CLARIFICATIONS

As of 12/15/20

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The following rule interpretations/clarifications are for the 2020-21 basketball season only, unless extended by the NCAA Women's Basketball Rules Committee at their annual meeting in May 2021.

12/15/20 – Bench Area, Coaching Box, Bench Decorum (Rules 4-4.1 and .2, 1-9, and 10-12.4.d).

The front boundary of the bench area is defined as the outer edge of the sideline or the nearest free-throw lane line during timeouts and the intermissions following the first and third period or prior to the start of any extra period. The back boundary is defined as the “back of the team bench”. In order to provide an additional opportunity for spacing between members of bench personnel, subject to social distancing guidelines, it is recommended that team benches now consist of multiple rows of seats where space is available. The back of the last row of seats is the back boundary of the bench area. These added rows of seats are considered to be within the bench area. The bench area begins at the 38-foot line and extends indefinitely beyond the end line extended parallel to the sideline. For facilities that need additional space to accommodate the recommended social distancing of bench personnel, the bench area may also turn so that it is parallel with the end line (i.e., an “L” shaped bench area). When the bench area is extended behind the end line, it must be completely behind the restraining line (located 6 feet from the end line) and may not go further than the lower defensive box “tick” marks located three feet from the nearest free-throw lane line.

The head coach may leave the coaching box (38-foot line to the end-line extended outside the sideline) **only** to communicate with bench personnel who are seated in that part of the bench area located behind the restraining line. **The head coach must remain standing completely behind the restraining line during this communication; once communication with the bench personnel has been completed, the head coach must return to the coaching box. The head coach must return to the coaching box before communicating with their players on the playing court or the game officials.** Violations of this rule may be penalized with a bench technical foul.

There has been no change to the playing rule that permits the head coach to sit anywhere within the bench area. However, when the head coach is using the coaching box, they must sit in the traditional bench area (that part of the bench area that is parallel to the sideline).

Rule 10-12.4.d limits when bench personnel, other than the head coach, may rise from their seats during a live ball. (*See Rule 6-1.2 for when the ball is live.*) Please note the following:

- This rule normally limits assistant coaches to stand to spontaneously react to an outstanding play (Rule 10-12.4.d.2) or to seek information from the official scorer or timer during a timeout

or intermission (Rule 10-12.4.d.5). It is commonplace during the game for assistant coaches to instruct team members while seated next to each other. Given the social distancing and/or assigned seating in the bench area, this instruction might not be possible. The rules committee is allowing **one** assistant coach, while the ball is live, to stand in the bench area solely to communicate with a team member seated elsewhere in the bench area and then return to their seat. When the assistant coach is out of their seat communicating with players on the court or game officials, the official shall issue a warning to the head coach. When the assistant coach is guilty of misconduct, a bench technical foul shall be assessed.

- Bench personnel located in rows other than the first row along the sideline or behind the end line may stand by their seat to view game action/cheer for their team; bench personnel should not be walking around the bench area. Acts of misconduct by these members of bench personnel shall be penalized with a technical foul. Individuals located in the first row are governed by Rule 10-12.4.d.

11/24/20 Masks/Face coverings.

Masks or face coverings worn by players may be any solid color. Teammates' masks/face coverings need not be similar in color to each other. Any logo on a mask/face covering must meet the size restriction found in Rule 1-25.1. For other information concerning masks/face coverings, please consult the current resocialization document found on the NCAA website's main COVID page: <http://www.ncaa.org/sport-science-institute/covid-19-coronavirus>.

11/24/20 – Games with less than two officials (Rules 2-1.1.a and 5-4).

In order to begin a game, there must be at least two officials present (Rule 2-1.1.a). The game may not begin or continue with less than two officials (Rule 5-3.7). The rules committee is amending their previous interpretations of this rule to permit a game to be officiated with one official only when the game started with at least two officials. Under the interrupted game rule (Rule 5-4), when conditions arise that prevent the continuation of the game, such as but not limited to having only one official, the game shall be resumed at the point of interruption unless the two teams agree otherwise (non-conference games) or there are applicable conference rules in place. When developing policies for continuing an interrupted game, the rules committee suggests that conferences consider the following:

- Assign a standby official
- Direct officials to adjust their officiating mechanics to accommodate an injured official who is not at 100% capacity
- Delay the continuation of the game to allow the conference to secure a replacement official
- If the competing teams are located within a reasonable distance from each other, reschedule the game on a mutually convenient date to be continued at the point of interruption
- If the two teams are scheduled to play a second time, continue the game from the point of interruption prior to the start of the second game
- Based on the game details at the time of the stoppage, the game may be declared completed.
- As a last resort, a conference should consult with their coordinator of officials before instituting a policy that contemplates the ability for the one official to complete the remainder of the game. This could include developing a formula considering both time remaining and the score differential of the game to determine when a game is complete and when one official would be

permitted to finish the game. As a reminder, the official maintains the authority to end the game when game conditions warrant.

11/16/20 – Video Boards/Walls.

Pictures of fans, flags, or other appropriate scenes are permitted on sideline or behind the end line video boards when they remain static while the ball is live. Any changes to these images may only occur when the ball is dead.

11/16/20 – Statistical information to the benches.

For those conferences that chose not to apply for an experimental rule waiver to transmit statistical data to the bench areas, the host institution may set up either a printer or a monitor in or just outside each bench area for the purpose of providing statistical data only to the benches. The only requirement is that the same type of equipment must be provided to each bench area (if the host institution has a printer, the visiting institution must also have a printer). There is no requirement that the printers or monitors be exactly the same make or model.

11/16/20 – Recorded crowd noise (Rules 5-14.17 and 10-12.2.h.1).

The rules committee was requested to allow “piped-in” artificial crowd noise during the 2020-21 basketball season. The rules committee approves this request with the following stipulations:

1. That artificial noisemakers, such as but not limited to, “Thundersticks”, cowbells, whistles, horns, etc., may not be a part of the crowd noise;
2. Bands, amplified music, or sound effects are still only permitted during dead-ball periods;
3. The artificial crowd noise may not drown out the officials’ whistles or disrupt the official’s management of the game;
4. That the decibel level, not to exceed 85db, must remain constant throughout the game when the ball is live;
5. No loudspeakers or amplifiers shall be placed in close proximity to the bench areas.
6. No negative crowd reactions or artificial sounds shall be permitted.
7. The referee shall have the authority to regulate and/or eliminate the artificial crowd noise in the event they determine that it is interfering with the conduct of the game.
8. Conferences are encouraged to approve the crowd noise being used by its institutions and it is recommended that all institutions’ artificial noise be similar.
9. This does not prevent a conference’s or institution’s media partner(s) from adding crowd noise to their broadcast provided it is inaudible within the facility.

10/29/20 – Remote Coaching.

The NCAA Women’s Basketball Rules Committee voted not to approve granting waivers for remote coaching/communication to the bench area on either a universal or case-by-case basis.

10/12/20 – Team Benches – Scorers and Timers’ Table (Rule 1-21.2).

Rule 1-21.2 requires that both team benches shall be located equidistant from the division line extended and at each side of the scorers’ table. Based on the resocialization document for basketball, it is recommended that to provide additional spacing between Tier 1 personnel (players, coaches, officials)

from other tiered individuals (i.e., table crew personnel), that institutions may either move the scorers' and timers' table across the playing court from the team benches or, when moving the table is not feasible due to the lack of power outlets and/or permanent plugs for the clocks and scoreboard, move the team benches across the playing court from the table. When the team benches are moved across the playing court from the table, the proper court markings must be in place. If an institution does not want to place permanent markings on the floor, they may use water-based paint or tape. The required markings include: 1) a 2-inch wide line extending three feet beyond the end line, 2) a 2-inch wide line 28-feet from each end line, extending three feet out of bounds and three feet inbounds, 3) a 2-inch wide line two feet in length 38 feet from each end line, and 4) an "X", NCAA logo, or NCAA Basketball logo at the division line in front of the scorers' table.

10/12/20 – Substitutions (Rules 1-3.6 and 3-6.1.c).

The original intent of the "X", which under the current rules is located at the division line in front of the scorers' table and may now also be an NCAA or NCAA basketball logo, was to identify the location of the official scorer so a substitute would know to whom they needed to report prior to their entry into the game. Currently, while the "X", NCAA logo, or NCAA basketball logo is required to be marked, there is no stated purpose within the rules for this mark. In some facilities, the "X" may not be located in front of the official scorer. Many believe that substitutes are required to be at the "X" in order to properly enter the game when beckoned by an official. This is not true. A substitute is only required to remain outside the boundary line until beckoned by an official (Rule 3-6.1.c). In addressing COVID-19-related concerns to provide adequate spacing, once a substitute(s) has reported to the official scorer, the substitute(s) shall remain between the "X" and the 38-foot coaching-box line on the same side of the division line as their team's bench area. No substitute is to remain on the "X" to ensure some distance between substitutes from opposing teams. When the team benches are not on the same side of the playing court as the scorers' and timers' table, substitutes shall report to the marked area and raise their hand to gain the attention of the table crew.

9/1/20 – The Captain (Rules 3-2.1 and 3-3).

It has been the prevailing practice that during the captains' meeting with the officiating crew, all captains as chosen by their respective institutions participate in this meeting. The playing rules state that at the start of the game, one of the five players on each team shall be the teams' respective captain. To help with keeping a physical distance between game officials and players, there should be no more than one captain from each team taking part in the captains' meeting. It need not be the "official" captain that represents the team at this meeting.