



WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

2023-24 NCAA Women's Basketball RULE INTERPRETATIONS/CLARIFICATIONS As of 9/27/23

Prepared by Jon M. Levinson, Women's Basketball Secretary-Rules Editor
jonlevinson@icloud.com

9/27/23 – Supplemental Apparel (Rule 1-23).

With the combination of the old Rule 1-23 and 1-24 in the new rule books, there were other changes made to supplemental apparel which were not specifically listed with the overall rewrite of Rules 1-22, 23, and 24. Most notably, the sleeves on an undershirt need not be the same length and tights are not required to have two legs of equal length, or even two legs. Approved rulings in the previous case book were deleted to reflect these changes as well.

9/22/23 – Game Clocks, Shot Clocks, and their Associated Lights (Rules 1-18.4 and 1-19.4)

A.R. 326 depicts a scenario when a team is the “home” team but is not playing on its “home” court and subsequently is not penalized for not having a properly marked division line or center circle. This may also be construed to apply to having a proper game clock display, red light/red LED lights, or properly mounted shot clock. When an institution is playing at an off-campus site that is not under its direct control or a conference tournament is played at an off-campus neutral site, such as when they play in a professional team's facility, the “home” team shall not be penalized when the timing equipment and the associated lights do not comply with NCAA playing rules.

9/8/23 – Restricted Area (Rules 1-8.1, 4-26, 10-4.7, and 10-10.15).

The purpose of the restricted area is to prevent a defender from obtaining and maintaining a position under the basket for the purposes of drawing an offensive/charging foul when the defender has time to get out from beneath the basket. With the reduction of the restricted area to under the basket and its application to all defenders, there exists the possibility that a defender may not have the opportunity to get out of the restricted area when a move to the basket from close proximity to it is imminent in a rebounding situation.

Play: Player A1 attempts a try for goal which is unsuccessful and rebounded by A2. In (1) A2, located in the lane area, immediately attempts a “put back” and makes illegal contact by crashing into the torso of opponent B2, who is located within the restricted area, or (2) A2, located on the wing just inside the three-point line, gains control of the rebound and immediately drives toward the basket. A2 makes illegal contact by crashing into the torso of defender B2, who is located within the restricted area.

Ruling: In (1), the official shall rule an offensive foul on A2 because B2 did not have time or distance to get out of the restricted area. In (2), this is a restricted-area blocking foul on B2 because B2 had time and distance to obtain and maintain a legal position outside the restricted area.

9/8/23 – Fighting (Rule 10-15).

Last season saw an uptick in the number of reported altercations/fights across women's basketball, and some questions have arisen regarding the correct adjudication of the playing rules in these situations. By rule, a player has committed a fighting act when they:

- a. Strike, or attempt to strike, another player, coach, or other team personnel with, but not limited to, a fist, hand, arm, foot, knee, or leg in a **combative** manner, regardless of whether there is contact or not;
- b. Use unsporting acts or comments that, in the opinion of the official, provoke the other individual to retaliate by fighting or
- c. Use a closed fist in an unsporting manner. In this instance, the individual has initiated a fighting act.

When individuals commit any of the above-listed acts, they have committed a disqualifying foul for fighting. The offender must immediately report to their team's locker room, and they are subject to suspension for fighting.

Not all action during an altercation (actual or perceived) is a fight. During a live ball, when an individual strikes an opponent with the hand, elbow, arm, foot, knee, or leg in a **noncombative** manner and the act is not only excessive but also severe or extreme, it shall be ruled a disqualifying foul and not a fighting action. The individual is still ejected and must report to their team's locker room, but they are **not** subject to the fighting penalty. Additionally, when the defined body part mentioned above is used to illegally strike an opponent, but the contact is not severe or extreme, the official shall make a judgment as to whether the contact is an intentional foul.

Regarding what team members or bench personnel are permitted to do to de-escalate a fight, different rules codes define which game participants may fill this role (sometimes called "peacemakers.") For NCAA women's basketball, the only individuals permitted by rule to be "peacemakers" are the head coach and any assistant coaches (Rule 10-12.5.b.1 and A.R. 362). Players may contact their teammates to restore order but may not initiate contact with members of the opposing team or spectators when a fight has or may break out. Still, they may seek to move their teammate away from any confrontation. When a player grabs an opposing player when a fight has or may break out, they are to be assessed a disqualifying foul, but they are not subject to the fighting suspension.

Bench personnel, outside of the head coach and any number of assistant coaches, are required to remain in the bench area when a fight has or may occur (Rule 10-12.5.b.1). Often, an altercation or fight will occur within or in close proximity to a team's bench area. The rules are designed to protect individuals from harm's way whenever possible. When an altercation/fight occurs so close to, or within, a team's bench area that bench personnel could potentially be put in harm's way, bench personnel from that team may leave the bench area in their half of the playing court (not to cross the division line) to get away from the altercation. Provided these members of bench personnel do not involve themselves in the altercation/fight, they are not penalized when they leave the bench area to protect themselves from a harmful situation.

9/8/23 – Contact on the Ball Handler/Dribbler (Rule 10-10.5, 10-6.3.a, and 10-6.5).

Rule 10-10.5 prohibits a defender from contacting the ball handler/dribbler, outside of one "hot-

stove” touch, to promote freedom of movement of the ball handler/dribbler. It is the responsibility of the defender to avoid contact on the ball handler/dribbler by using an impermissible body part. Rule 10-6.5 permits a player to extend their arms fully or partially, other than vertically, so long as this contact does not hinder the opponent. As it applies to a ball handler/dribbler, such contact with the defender’s extended arm is illegal because it is not the permitted “hot-stove” touch with the front or back of one hand. While a player is permitted to hold their hands and arms in front of their face or body for protection in a recoil action rather than a pushing action to absorb force from imminent contact by an opponent, it is expected that the hands or arms are close to their body for protection and are not extended outward in a manner that affects the movement of their opponent. When an opponent’s arms are extended out and make contact with the ball handler/dribbler in a manner prohibited by Rule 10-10.5, a foul shall be ruled on the opponent.