

Basketball Officials Pre-game Conference

Dallas Basketball Officials Association

Two Person Crew Mechanics & Floor Coverage

Whether you are a new official or an "old hand" this document has something for you. It was compiled from several articles that appeared in Referee Magazine over the years and from over twenty-five years of officiating experience at the junior high, high school and college levels. A good pre-game with your partner (yes, even with the partners you've worked with before - you've both slept since that game) WILL reduce the risk of mishaps on the court and make your game an enjoyable experience for all.

The first section of this document is designed to step you through the pre-game with additional verbiage describing the topics in greater detail. It can be used every game for newer officials and as a pre-season review for "old hands". The second section is just the outline without the extraneous explanations. For those of you who still use Barry Caponi's outline from his pre-game educational sessions from the past, this is an updated version.

General Philosophy

The pre-game conference is run by the "R" (referee), as assigned by the assignment secretary. If no referee was pre-assigned, make the determination of which of you will be the referee for tonight's game the first decision you make. That individual should be the most experienced official assigned to that game and should also run the pre-game. Having said that, the pre-game should still be an interactive exercise.

As time can sometimes be short prior to a game, (particularly early starting games) you can begin the pre-game while you're still getting dressed by talking about the things that you don't need a game board for. For that purpose, the pre-game is divided into two parts; **non-game board topics** and **game board topics**.

Note: As the "R" will conduct the pre-game, when you see "I" used, it refers to the referee and "you" refers to the umpire.

Non-game board topics

- General concepts

- This is the most important game being played anywhere tonight for these kids, fans and coaches - let's make sure we officiate it that way, through effort and attitude.
- Any new rules (particularly early in the season)
- Any particular game situations that have come up recently
- Protecting the shooter
- How we're going to handle shirt tails
- Jump stop - get it early and consistently
- Hand checking, arm bars - both on ball and off ball - let's warm them early, call it early if they don't respond
- Off ball screening - let's warm them early, call it early if they don't respond
- Taunting - automatic "T"
- Rough post play - let's warm them early, call it early if they don't respond
- This is high school or below - not college. There should be VERY few train wrecks without a call.
- How you will:
 - Use captains during the game
 - Talk to coaches during the game
 - Talk to players during the game
- Fights (get the numbers of the players from the team you're responsible for - easier than remembering both)
- Call it the same in the first two minutes as the last two minutes, even in the delay game.
- Let me live or die with calls in my area - except in game control situations. Do not be defensive about this. We should not be looking in each other's areas, but if something is there and NEEDS to be called, call it.
- I like to work quickly - get the players to the FT line quickly, put it in play on throw in quickly - cuts down on excess conversation from the coaches and fans
- Let's make sure we don't leave a foul too quickly, particularly very physical fouls or in a game that is charged with emotion.
- Let's get good eye contact prior to putting the ball in play. I may be talking with someone and not ready. Do NOT assume.
- If we're going the down court, and if I've already started running down court, I'm ready.
- If we've had a substitution, the "off" official should count the players and make sure we've got 5 on 5.
- If you're putting the ball in play, look at me and I'll give you a signal if I'm ready to go and I've counted the players. If my hand is up in the air, I'm NOT ready.
- If we need to talk about ANYTHING, let's do it

- At the first time-out, let's get together and talk
- Simultaneous whistles
 - If the play is coming at you, you've got the play (two person mechanics). If we're an experienced crew, it is possible to yield to the official the play is coming from (particularly if it is coming from their primary area). This is a change in philosophy from the way we did things in the past and comes from three person mechanics. Just make sure we're on the same page.
 - If it's coming to me and you want it, come in hard and tell me you've got something that occurred prior to my call. Let's talk about it and then decide and report it.
 - Don't point at players or signal foul until we've decided who is going to take it.
 - If we do call a "blarge" with signals, then that's what we're going with.
- If we need to change a call: (must be 100% sure)
 - If a 3 pointer - stop clock, signal and go - no conversation necessary
 - Out of bounds - come to me to discuss - if I give you the stop sign, I did it on purpose, so stop
- Help with shooters - don't forget, if you're making an off the ball foul call, you've got to get your own.
- On your foul call as a Lead, as the Trail, I'll get between you and the table when:
 - The ball went in (I will tell you the ball went in, not that it is good - that's your decision)
 - It was a pass (not a shot and I didn't hear you yell pass - I will yell pass, so if you don't hear that and you know it was a pass, let me know)
 - Goal tending or basket interference
- Time outs
 - If coach is asking, make sure it is the coach and then look back to play one more time to make sure the same team has a player in control of the ball.
 - "Piggy back" or not?
 - Let's talk about putting the ball back in play while they are going to the benches, then report and tell timer to start clock.
 - Ask coach which type of time out right away - decide if you'll ask more than once
 - Report the time out and then talk about putting the ball back in play again to reinforce.
 - Go to the top of key for 30 seconds and to the blocks for a full

- Warning horn - we'll both move to our respective huddle and tell them "first warning"
- Handling coaches and players
 - I'll let you handle your own situations, but I'll cover your back - same with players
 - Discuss philosophy of talking to coaches
 - Talk about the coaching box
 - Talk about the seat belt rule if there is a "T"
 - If there is a warning issued - make sure your partner knows it - same with players
 - If we do call a "T" on a coach, let's make sure we do everything possible to let the other official call the second if it is necessary - and remember, we've got to report it if we toss a coach, so let's make sure it's warranted
- Last second shots
 - Warn each other when we get under 20 seconds
 - If I see your back, you've got it, otherwise trail has it
 - If we're under 3 seconds on the clock (and the clock is stopped) let's talk. Whoever we decide has it from that conversation, has it no matter what happens
 - Wave it off immediately if you're not going to count it
- Fouls in general
 - Let's make sure the non-calling official does not take his eyes off the players while our partner reports the foul.
 - Let's switch on all shooting fouls in the front court
 - Let's not have any long switches
 - Let's switch if we've been subject to the same view for too long.
 - Be aware of any lopsidedness in the number of fouls called against any team. Do not pass on any that the other team might commit if that is the case.
 - If the number of fouls is lopsided, understand why, in case you're asked about by a coach.
 - Reporting fouls - clear players, free throw line and 3-point arc.
 - Let's make sure our partner knows which direction we're going in and where we'll be putting the ball in play (if not shooting) immediately.
- Free throws
 - Review new rule from 2002-2003 - 4 and 2
 - Lead check the bottom spaces
 - Watch opposite sides
 - Look to table before the last shot

- Technical fouls
 - Let's come together and talk before administering to make sure we both know what happened and what we're going to do. Same on multiple fouls.
 - Off official watches players
- Handling the table during the game
 - If it's a lower level game, non-district or tournament game, watch the clock early to make sure the timer knows when to start the clock
- At half time, I'll meet you behind the center circle
- As we approach the end of the game, let's talk about where we'll exit and then we'll exit together, quickly.
- Game time topics
 - We'll wear jackets on the court before the game, but not to start the second half. If one of the teams exits the floor during warm ups, that team's official can take the jackets back to the locker room (or not)
 - We'll enter the court area when the game clock shows 15:00. I will blow whistle to announce the presence of the officials (particularly necessary when the players are able to dunk).
 - We will not penalize any dunking until they know we're there
 - We'll line up at the 28' lines (where they used to be) [*Can line up together at mid-court - you determine so that you're both lined up in the same place.*]
 - You line up at the home team's end of the court and count the players for me. I'll line up at the visitors end and count them.
 - *I'll make sure we find a game administrator and talk with him or her prior to checking the book.*
 - At 10:30 before game time, I'll head over to the scorer's table to check the book, pick out a ball, and talk to the table personnel. When I'm done, we'll get the captains. [*Some officials like to get the captains right away and some later. It doesn't make any difference.*]
 - During the captain's meeting I'm going to cover the following:
 - Introductions
 - Designate the speaking captains
 - I'll tell the speaking captains that I'll look to them for help if we need assistance in controlling their teammates.
 - I'll ask if they have any questions
 - "Play hard and good luck"
 - Do you want to say anything? If so, I'll give you the floor right before I say good luck.
 - [*Don't make pre-game captain's meetings any longer than this.*]

- At 1:30 on the clock, we'll head over to say hello to the coaches. We'll introduce ourselves and remind them of the UIL sportsmanship topic, and tell them how we'll enforce the coaches' box tonight. [*See Basketball Officials Communication Concepts document for what to say.*]

Game Board Topics

- Jump ball
 - I'll toss it and call back my own bad toss - you watch the 8 non-jumpers (whistle will be out of my mouth)
 - Talk about when "R" might not go to trail
 - If it goes out of bounds behind me and I don't know whose ball it is, I'll stop the clock - then I'll look to you for help. On this (and any play we look to our partner for help) give a good strong signal of direction or jump ball signal. Do NOT give it back
 - Beware of a quick 3 pointer off the tap. I could get tangled up. If you've got your hand up as a lead, when you see me pick it up, you can drop it. (Same goes for fast break.)
 - I'll look to see if the arrow was set properly
- Front court coverage
 - Where to divide the court, including unbalanced court coverage and weak-side, off-ball coverages.
 - How to hand off the ball when it goes from one official's area to the other (keep counts and make eye contact to be sure your partner has picked it up before letting it go)
 - Sideline responsibility and the exceptions (dead spot sideline)
 - Delay game in the front court
 - Out of bounds coverage if the ball is trapped above the key on the lead's side of the court
 - Throw-ins -where will we put the ball in play after violations and fouls (divide the court so you know - **no sideline throw-ins by lead**). Use the 3-point arc.
 - Overlook each other's 3 point responsibilities
 - Trail - don't leave a 3 point shooter in your corner too soon
 - Lead - don't leave a 3 point shooter in your corner too soon
 - Rebounding - trail will get most of the "over the back" - there should be few "over the back" calls made from the L.
 - Backside help

- **Back court coverage**
 - Sidelines - trail has both - got to follow ball - don't hug sideline
 - Quick throw to mid-court, trap just over 10 second line - lead must stay until trail can get up there (if there is pressure on the ball)
 - Press help in the back court
- **Transition game & press coverage**
 - Pass/crash coverage
 - Pass/crash exception in lane on fast break
 - The lead needs to hang back to help if there are more than four players in the backcourt.
- **And last, but not least - let's have fun out there**