

OFF- BALL COVERAGE BASICS

1. Trust your partner to referee the plays that occur outside your own basic area of responsibility.
2. Off-ball coverage does not mean not knowing where the ball is or where your partner is. Use peripheral vision or sneak peaks to keep track of the ball and your partner.
3. Referee the players without the ball that are in your area as if they had the ball. The same principles* of impeding the progress of an opponent apply except for obtaining initial legal guarding position. If a player without the ball is moving, the guard must give at least one, but not more than two, strides before obtaining legal guarding position, depending on speed of movement of the opponent. If the opposition is not moving, obtaining legal guarding position is the same as if the opponent did have the ball.
4. Refereeing off-ball requires discipline. We all grew up watching the ball wherever it went on TV or in person. One way to discipline yourself to watch off-ball is to do it when you watch games on TV or in person. Another way is to simply watch the referees to see where they position themselves in relation to players and plays.
5. Excellent off-ball coverage helps to eliminate rough play or at least limit it and it promotes cleaner play. Rough play is, and has been, a point of emphasis (POE) the last few years and good off-ball coverage will help to address and clean up this issue. This gives each team a fairer chance to win. And that is our charge as referees, to give both teams an equal opportunity to win!!

*Principles are holding, pushing, handchecking, block/charge, screening, chucking cutters, etc.

SCREENING

...A player who screens shall not:

- a. When he/she is outside the visual field of a stationary opponent, take a position closer than a normal step from the opponent.
- b. When he/she assumes a position at the side or in front of a stationary opponent, make contact with that opponent. If the screen is set within the visual field of a stationary opponent, the screener may be as close to the opponent as the screener desires, short of contact.
- c. Take a position so close to a moving opponent that this opponent cannot avoid contact by stopping or changing direction. The speed of the player to be screened will determine where the screener may take his/her stationary position. This position will vary and may be one to two normal steps or strides from the opponent.

- d. After assuming his/her legal screening position, move to maintain it, unless he or she moves in
the same direction and path of the opponent. When both opponents are moving in exactly the
same path and same direction, the player behind is responsible if contact is made because the
player in front slows up or stops and the player behind overruns his/her opponent.

If the screener violates any of these provisions and contact results, he or she has committed a personal foul.

A player who is screened within his/her visual field is expected to avoid contact by going around the screener. In cases of screens outside the visual field, the opponent may make inadvertent contact with the screener and if the opponent is running rapidly, the contact may be severe. Such a case is to be ruled as incidental contact provided the opponent stops or attempts to stop on contact and moves around the screen, and provided the screener is not displaced if he/she has the ball. A player may not use the arms, hands, hips or shoulders to force his/her way through a screen or to hold the screener and then push the screener aside in order to maintain a guarding position on an opponent.

PLEASE REMEMBER

- a. A legal screen is action by a player who, **without causing contact**, delays or prevents an opponent from reaching a desired position.
- b. **Time and distance** are factors that must be considered in each screening situation.
- c. When the conditions of time & distance have been met, the screener must be stationary; if the **screener is moving** when **contact** between the screener & the player being screened occurs, the screener is guilty of **blocking**, which is a **foul**.
- d. The **only legal moving screen** permitted by rule is when the screener is moving in exactly the same path and same direction as the player being screened, **without the screener making contact**. A player having established a path may continue to move in that path.
- e. In setting a multiple screen, all screeners must comply with the legal screening principles.
- f. A player screened from the rear may contact, and **possibly dislodge**, the screener and **not cause a foul**, provided the screened player did all he/she could to **minimize the force** by stopping or changing the direction of that force. The reason for this interpretation is not to have a double jeopardy situation. The screening team has accomplished its objective. To also call a foul on the screened player would be in opposition to the spirit and intent of the screening rules and principles.