



# 19 SMART MOVES

FOR THE BASKETBALL OFFICIAL

# 1. REFEREE THE DEFENSE

- Defensive coverages often dictate offensive plays
- Watch where defenders are positioned on the court
- Watch defender movements to judge who commits a foul
- Refers to an attitude not a visual command



## 2. THINK LIKE THE OFFENSE

- Good officials should be like good point guards
- Important to recognize defensive tendencies to adjust
- Allows you to anticipate offensive plays and move to get proper angles and spacing



# 3. GET GAMES PROPERLY

- Assigning methods vary across states, levels and associations
- Do not compromise your principles to get games
- Keep your assignments!
  - Minimize turned back games
- Being dishonest about assignments results in burning bridges with assignors



## 4. MEET WITH GAME MANAGEMENT

- Notify someone from game management as soon as you arrive
- Confirm with game manager:
  - Tipoff time
  - If there are any special presentations, etc. during the game
  - Where he/she will be located during the game
  - Who will be escorting you and your partner to and from the locker room



# 5. SEND REPORTS IMMEDIATELY

- Send all reports within 24 hours
- Call your supervisor as soon as possible before mailing the report if necessary
  - Supervisors want to hear about problems from officials **FIRST!**
- Report all items that are *supposed* to be reported
  - Not your call as to what items you think warrant reporting



## 6. SOLICIT CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM

- Your partner is a great source for constructive criticism
  - Ask what could you have done differently or better?
- If you don't want the truth, don't ask
- Be prepared to make changes if necessary
- Be ready to offer critique of others if asked
- Try to come up with 3 things for your partner to think about after each game



# 7. WRITE A JOURNAL

- A journal is a great way to look back during and after the season to find patterns
- Things to note include:
  - Strange plays
  - Your feelings about your performance
  - Notes about your partner
  - Things you did well
  - Things you could improve on





# 8. GET THE BALL IN PLAY QUICKLY

- One of the great aspects of basketball:

*The action is nearly non-stop!*

- Take advantage of that by moving the game along quickly
- Dead ball situations are prime-time for trouble between coaches, officials and players!
- Avoid problems by getting the ball back in play as quickly as possible without rushing



# 9. GET BOTH COACHES TOGETHER

- Coaches believe in a fantasy game known as “working the officials”
- One way to eliminate a conversation with a coach who is complaining about the other team:
  - Put the conversation on pause and tell the coach that you’re going to call the other coach over to hear what’s being discussed
  - Almost always ends the conversation
- Always get coaches together when something out of the ordinary occurs



# 10. GLANCE AT THE CLOCK

- Both officials should glance at the clock each time a whistle blows to stop play
- Off ball official may have a better chance to glance more quickly
- Double check that the clock displays the same time right before the ball is live again
- Having clock information helps in case of a clock malfunction



# 11. STAY AWAY FROM THE COACHES DURING THE PREGAME

- Don't go directly to the scorer's table before the game
- Standing near the scorer's table gives coaches the opportunity to “shmooze” you
- Don't give the coach the chance to ask any questions he/she could later use against you



# 12. LEARN ABOUT THE TEAMS DURING THE PREGAME

- Watch for team and player tendencies during warm-ups such as:
  - Which way the big man likes to spin toward the basket
  - If the team likes to set many off-ball screens
  - Who the team's best shooter(s) is/are
- Taking these mental notes will help you to anticipate plays during the game



## 13. KEEP THE CAPTAINS' MEETING BRIEF

- The captain's meeting should never last more than a minute
- Use the time to clear up any points of confusion
  - Don't hold a rules clinic!
- Tell captains you will come to them for help in dealing with players on their team
- Ask captains if they have any questions (*they won't*) and give your partner time to add something
- Shake hands and be done!



## 14. MEET THE COACHES JUST BEFORE TIPOFF

- Stick with #11: avoid the coaches before the game!
- Meet around the one-minute mark unless otherwise specified
- Try to get to the coaches before they are in their final team huddle



## 15. STAY AWAY FROM INJURED PLAYERS

- When an injury occurs move away from the area *immediately*
- Avoid the urge to help
- Being nearby also makes it easier to fire an emotional cheap shot in your direction





# 16. LEAVE THE COURT QUICKLY

- Rule of thumb for postgame exits:  
*When the final horn sounds, get out of there!*
- Don't worry about where the basketball goes, not your responsibility!
- Stay away from the scorer's table
- The quicker you're off the floor the safer you will be



# 17. KEEP TRACK OF ALTERNATING- POSSESSION

- An easy way to keep track of the possession arrow:
  - Carry an extra whistle or air needle
  - Keep the whistle/needle in the pocket that points the correct direction of the alternating-possession arrow
  - Switch the whistle/needle to the other pocket each time it changes
- This strategy allows you to know who is supposed to get the throw-in even if there's a “mistake” at the scorer's table



# 18. MEET WITH YOUR PARTNER AFTER TECHNICAL FOULS

- Technical foul situations can get emotional
- Oftentimes the calling official can get confused as to which team shoots at which basket
- To alleviate this problem:
  - Meet with your partner briefly at midcourt after the foul is reported to the scorer
  - The non-calling official can then direct the calling official in the right direction



# 19. STUDY THE GAME

- Great referees think about offensive styles, defensive schemes, tempo & tendencies
- The more you know about the game and a team's tendencies, the better prepared you'll be
- The game of basketball is constantly becoming more complex
- Officials must adjust accordingly

