

# Technical Jargon: Rule Interpretation



## PART 1 – BASIC OFFICIATING: BEFORE THE START OF A GAME

The two referees will arrive dressed formally at the court 1 hour before the start of proceedings and after meeting each other, will proceed to check the court facility and all of the technical equipment ensuring that it firstly works and secondly, meets with the FIBA rule-book specifications. (Remember to take a tape measure and rulebook with you)

Once satisfied, you will leave for the referees change room where you will warm up and have what is called a 'pre-game' conference. A pre-game conference is where each referee, will discuss how they are going to handle the game. They would normally discuss matters such as signaling, mechanics (zone & line calling), preventative officiating, contact situations, hand checking, off the ball screening, interference, special situations and any matter relating to the handling of certain players or coaches who are known to be trouble makers. This mentally prepares you for the game.

With 20 minutes to go before the start of the game, you and your fellow referee will leave the change room and proceed on to the court. The decision on who is going to be the referee is determined by who the most senior official is. (This is not necessary by age but decided by experience, normally by a senior grading, or by the date of such grading. If both officials are of equal grading, then a toss of the coin determines the referee status.) Remember, the referee makes all final decisions in the game, signs off the score-sheet, and it will be he who tosses the ball at the beginning of all periods.

You will introduce yourself to the table officials and coaches. The referee will request the time- keeper to run down the 30 sec clock & sound the buzzers. He makes sure that the score sheets are filled out correctly and calls for coaches' signatures, thus indicating acknowledgment of acceptance of their teams line up. Check to see if the game balls are in order. Thereafter, stand side by side at the half way line looking into the teams as they warm up on court, making sure that the teams and the benches are well behaved, correctly dressed etc.

If there are team announcements to be made, on 6 minutes to go, call both teams from the court, if not, then on 5 minutes you will walk onto the court and blow 5 minutes, like wise on 3 minutes. On one minute to go, walk onto the court and blow hard on your whistle, calling both teams from the court. You are now ready to start the game.

## PART 2 - BASIC OFFICIATING: THE START OF A GAME

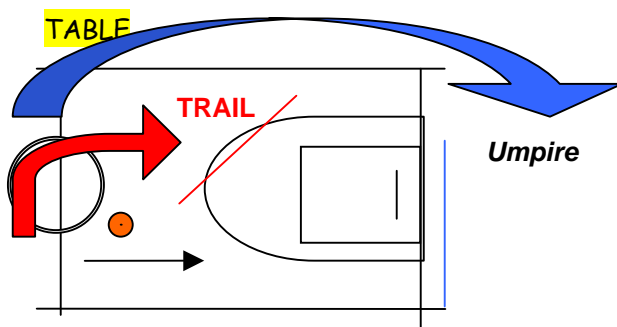
The two referees will enter the court. The referee will take up position at the center circle and the umpire at the half way line near the table.

The players enter the court and position themselves around the circle. Allow them to shake hands – this ritual eases them from a little nervous tension. The two jumpers stand on either side of the half way line, just off the centerline. Remember that no jewelry may be worn and all shirts must be tucked in at all times. This includes you!

Whilst everyone is around you, shake both captains hands – this identifies them to the table, spectators and to your colleague. This is an opportune time to address the teams captain, asking them for their cooperation and warning them to talk only through their captains and a casual warning to have their shirts in at all times. Wish both teams luck.

The umpire checks with the commissioner if the table is ready to proceed. He gives the "thumbs up" signal to his colleague when the game is ready to start. The ball is thrown between the two jumpers at a height where the players have to jump to tap it. Remember, the whistle should be out of the mouth. Once the ball is released, take one step back and wait until the play has dispersed before taking up your position. The diagram explains how & where to move too.

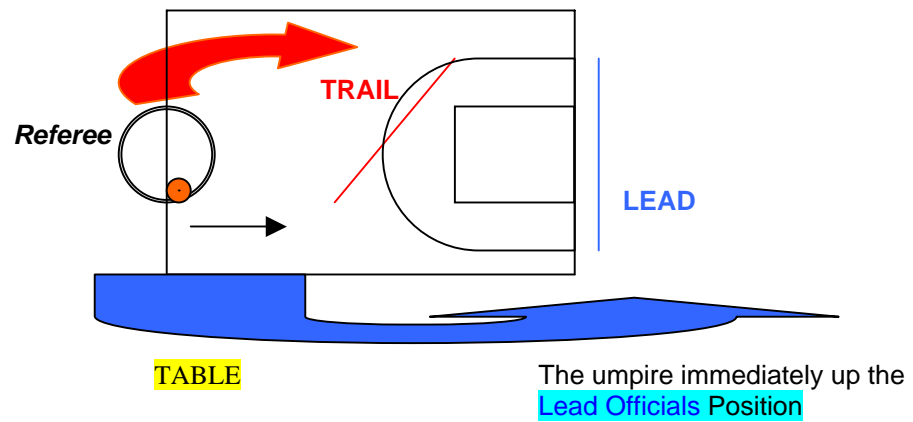
### BASIC MECHANICS



Umpire takes up the Lead Officials position & moves immediately to the base line

The referee immediately moves behind the play & takes up the Trail Officials position

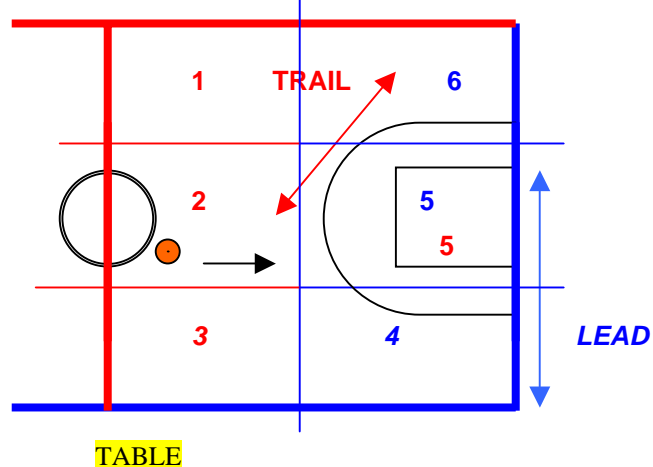
The referee takes up the position of the **trail official**



### Practical Tips

- Ref your zones & your lines as lead or trail official
- Do not call on your fellow officials zones or lines unless a technical, unsportsmanlike or disqualification foul is imminent.
- The referee without control of the ball shall attend all table officials calls
- Control the incoming sub on the half way line
- On a side line violation, keep space between yourself and the player (some 1½ meters)
- Bounce pass the ball to the player, rather than handing it over
- Practice your signals in front of a mirror ensuring that you use the correct signal for the correct call.
- Use preventative officiating to avoid unnecessary calls.
- Practice moving at all times even if it is a step in either direction because to make the right call, you need to be in the right place at the right time – that being looking for spaces between the players, because where there is space, there can be no contact.
- You should be no further than 3 meters off any call. This ensures confidence in the player and evokes no argument.

Highlighted Zones to be refereed by the correct official



Zone 5 is a neutral zone where both officials can call. The criteria used is that the **trail** will call anything **above shoulder** height and the **Lead** official all situations **below shoulder** height.

For example

- contact on the shot (Trail Officials call)
- illegal use of knees / holding (Lead officials call)

### PART 3: BASIC OFFICIATING - JUMPBALL (ART 25)

A jumpball takes place when the official tosses the ball between two opposing players at the start of the game, and each quarter and extra period. It takes place at the center circle.

A jump ball is normally called in **held-ball** situations, or when both officials cannot agree whose ball it is (this should never happen), or when it lodges between the ring & b/board. It takes place at the nearest circle to the infringement.

If more than two players are involved with a held- ball or side line ball dispute, the referee will decide on any two players of equal height and stature, to contest at the jump.

No player who has positioned them selves around the circle may have any part of their body in the circle other than the two jumpers. Either player may tap the ball not more than twice, before it touches the floor or is cleared from the circle.

On any double foul violation (except for a unsportsmanlike or technical fouls), the penalty is rendered as a side line violation and administered as such to the team last in control of the ball.

**Practice tip** - (you draw a mark against a wall where you have achieved your highest jump and practice by throwing the ball up with one hand to exactly where this mark is. You should practice throwing until you reach this mark 10 out of 10 times)

### PART 4: ADMINISTRATION OF SIDE BALL & FREE THROWS

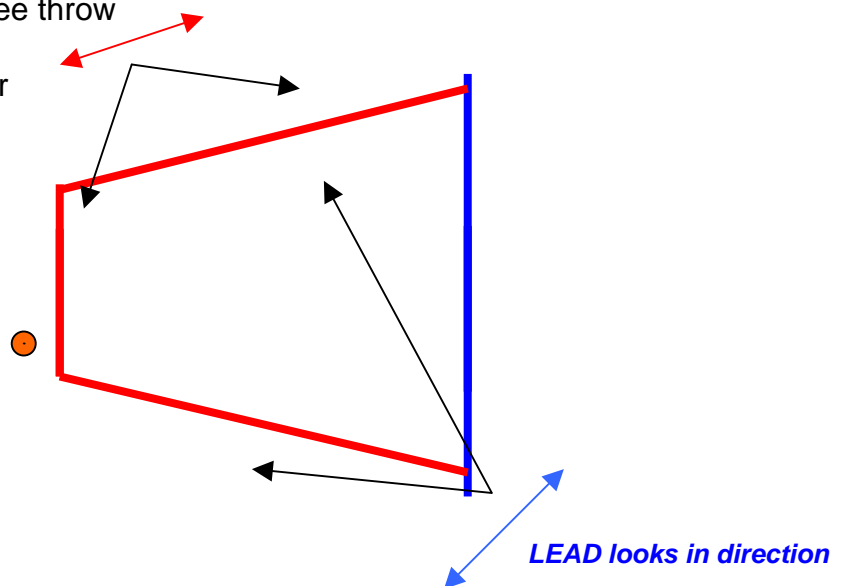
The ball must be placed in at the point it went out.

The golden rule is to have your body between player and ball when handling a sideline throw in. Stand about 2m away from the player & when you and your partner are ready, give the thumbs up & bounce pass the ball to the player.

#### Free throws

**TRAIL** looks in direction of

- Trial Administrates all 1<sup>st</sup> free throw
- Lead administrates all other shots



It is important to wait until your partner is ready. Walk in to the key area and point to the basket calling out the number of shots to come. Bounce-pass the ball to the shooter and move away along the free throw line stopping before the sideline. Stand indicating as per signals 3 shots, 2 shots or 1 shot.

The lead official will administrate all other shots and will simulate his partners action except he passes the ball from the base line to the shooter & takes place behind the last defender. Both officials must watch early breaks and disadvantage actions on the last free throw. Violations are called as per the rulebook.

## PART 5: SUBSTITUTIONS

All substitutions must be seated at the table before being allowed onto the court. The sub must enter the court, when called by the referee. The subbed player may leave from anywhere on the court.

Should a player get up and leave the sub chair then he has indicated that he does not want a substitution any more and such sub is withdrawn. A player may leave the bench and go to the toilet with out requesting permission from the referee. Substitutions are called on any foul, jump ball, or teams side ball.

## PART 6: TIME OUTS

All time-out period's, are requested only by the coach or his assistant. (ie)1 time out per quarter in the 1<sup>st</sup> , 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter and 2 time outs in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

All extra periods are entitled to 1 time out per team. Time outs are called on any stop ball with one exception to the rule. When a basket is scored a time out by the defensive team may call the time out as long as it was requested before the act of shooting commenced.

## PART 7: ADVANTAGE /DISADVANTAGE

Basketball is a non-contact game but where 10 players are moving in fast & close proximity on the court, contact is inevitable. The Advantage / Disadvantage rule determines with this contact should be called or not.

There is no advantage played in basketball therefore, if a player or coach, gains an advantage or creates a disadvantage by using illegal actions or tactics, then it must be called as a violation immediately.

Contact on a player with or without the ball must be of such a nature that if it places that person at a disadvantage and such contact results **in loss of continuous motion** or in **loss of control of the ball**, a violation has occurred and must be called.

Contact on the shooter, unless this contact is in its verticality and considered legal, must always be called. Protect the shooter.

## PART 8: PREVENTATIVE OFFICIATING:

The whistle is used to control the game. However, if you can warn the player verbally or by action, before making the call, and you are successful in this manner, then use preventative officiating to allow the free flow of the game.

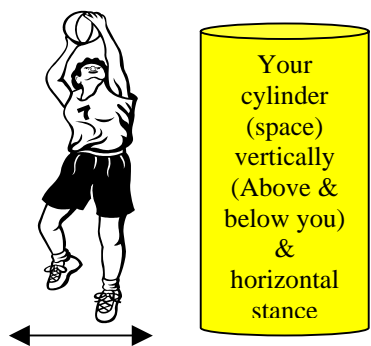
## PART 9: PRINCIPAL OF VERTICALITY

### What is the principal of verticality?

The rulebook describes it in Art 46.5, as the space occupied by a player on the floor in a normal basketball defense position. The cylinder is defined as being to the front of the tips of the toes, to the rear of the buttocks and to the sides of the outside edge of arms and legs.

In layman terms, it is the space that is above and below and around a player in which that player has the right to move in, jump up into and land within, as long as an opponent has not take up that space before the player moved.

Conditions apply to this principle, as this imaginary cylinder around the player is approximately shoulder width in circumference and extends to the maximum height that this player can jump or reach. It also serves as a barrier which prevents the player from extending his / her arms out of when defending. Verticality determines the type of defense or offence that can be played as extension of ones arms or legs from this cylinder & can result in a foul being committed should contact occur which causes or creates **an advantage**



or **disadvantage situation.**

A common failure of most referees is that the 'principle of verticality' is called out of context and with no consideration taken into account for the principles of '**advantage & disadvantage**', '**block & charge**' or '**screening situations**' (see Edition 2 of Officiating 2000). Remember, if in your opinion, an advantage is not created or a disadvantage caused when contact takes place within this imaginary cylinder, then there is no foul.

### Penalty

The whistle is blown and the stop clock signal is given. The type of foul is indicated. I.e. Illegal use of elbows, body contact, illegal use of hands or pushing can be indicated (signals 37 – 41 - Remember to use the correct signal for the type of foul committed.)

Proceed to about 5 - 8 meters in front of the table, and indicate the player's number, type of foul and direction of play or shooting penalty.

## PART 10: THE BLOCK & CHARGE

The **criteria for a charge to be called** is that the defender must be **facing the opponent** either by standing still in a legal guarding position, or **moving in a backward motion**, or **moving in a lateral motion** or be in the air (**in his verticality**) when contact by the offensive player is on the **torso**.

The following Principle's apply

- Referee the **defense** - if the defense follows the above criteria, he is **legal**
- On contact, was the defensive player moving **forward**? If the answer is **yes**, a block must be called.
- **Where was contact?** - If contact is on the **shoulder, arms or knees** and the defensive player placed the offensive player at a **disadvantage**, and then a block must be called. But if the offensive player was not placed at a disadvantage, then there is **no call** and the signal for "play on" is given.
- Did the defensive player occupy the space in front of the offensive player **before** the offensive player left the floor in the act of shooting? If the answer is **yes, it is a charge**. If **no**, then it is a **block**.

### Referees Tips

- The interpretation becomes really simple if the official understands primarily the principles of a legal guarding position. (Contact on torso, backward lateral & vertical movement etc)
- Forward movement of the feet of the defensive player just before or during contact determines the block Call.
- Under all other circumstances, REFEREE THE DEFENSE - if the defensive player is legal, then the offensive player has committed a charge.
- Remember, call or signal what you see & believe in your judgment! This avoids confusion & instills confidence.

## PART 11: SCREENING (WITHOUT THE BALL)

Unlike calling a block & charge, screening off the ball determines another set of principles.

Screening is when A PLAYER set a pick (blocks a players movement by using their body from reaching a set point), thus stopping the opposition without the ball legally by following the principles of time & distance.

Time & distance is determined by giving a space between you and the player you are guarding. A normal pivot made by this player determines this space.

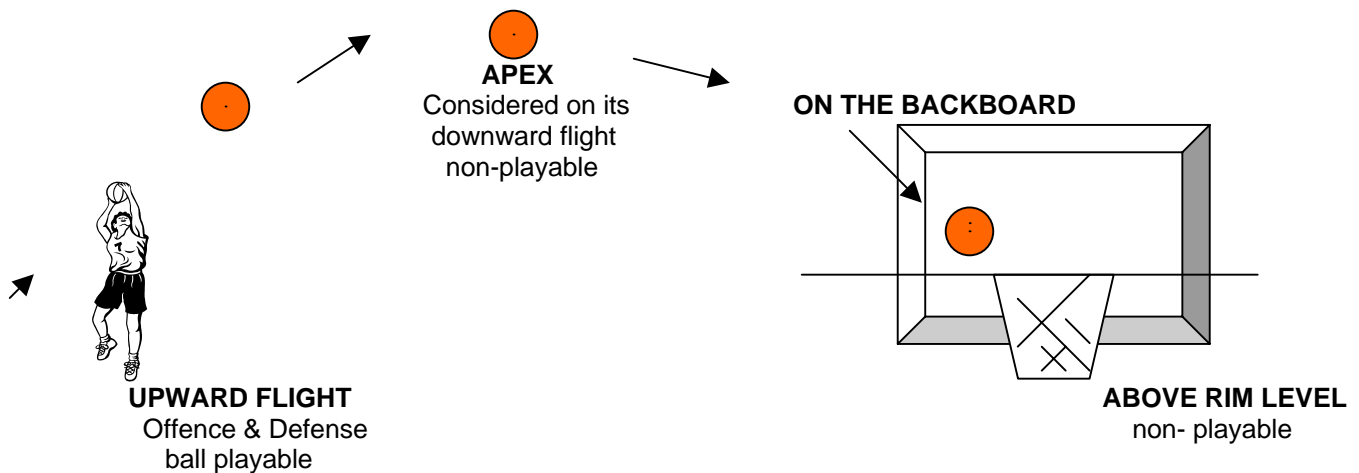
If you are in this space at the time the player pivots and contact is made, it is considered that you did not give enough time & distance (space) and a foul can be called on you if your action results in causing or creating a advantage / disadvantage situation.

**The referee needs to move parallel to the players looking for this correct 'space'. We call this moving into the right position at the right time to make the right call. Penalty is a foul.**

## PART 12: INTERFERENCE

Interference is when the ball after it has been shot at the basket is stopped or assisted (interfered with) in some way by the defense or offence, whilst it is on its downward flight above the level of the rim and it is evident that it will pass through the hoop.

The criteria follow the set principle diagram

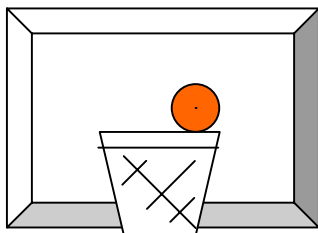


### Penalty

Should the offence play the ball whilst it is on its downward flight above the level of the rim and in your opinion, it is evident that it will pass through the hoop, then it is a violation and the two or three points are cancelled, with the ball given to the defensive team at the side line in line with the free throw extended line.

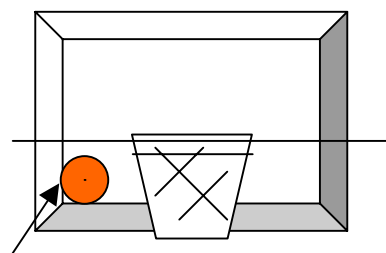
However, if the defense plays the ball (as above) then you will call the basket good & the points attempted will be counted.

Two other examples are as follows:



**On the ring**

**Playable by Offence & Defense**



**Below the ring**

**Playable by Offence & Defense**

If the ball is on the ring or has bounced from the ring, either team can play it. If the ball is below the level of the ring and on its upward flight, either team can play it.

## **PART 13: THE 3-SECOND CALL**

3 seconds – the vein of contention amongst most coaches & players because if their key is being pressed, and the opposition is all over them, it cant be bad defence, oh no, it must be that the referee has forgotten to call 3 seconds! Well, contrary to common belief, the 3 seconds is interpreted in the following way

'If a player gains an advantage by being in the "3-second zone" – (restricted area), for more than 3 seconds, it is a violation. However, if he is not participating in the play, warn him to leave this area. If he fails to heed your preventative officiating, then call the violation.

If the player is in this restricted area for longer than 3 seconds and receives a pass, or a shot is about to be taken by another player, then the call must be made to ensure that no advantage is gained by this player's actions.'

### **Refereeing Tips**

- Try always to signal the 3-second count before making the call – in fact make a show of your count by hand to avoid any controversy.
- Allow the player with the ball who is in the zone, to complete his attempt towards the basket even if it does take a little longer than the required 3 seconds. However, if he uses this ploy to gain time & then passes off, call him for the 3-second violation immediately
- Remember, a player who leaves the court via the restricted area (base line of the key) and returns into the court via the same point, and then participates in the play, causes a 3 second violation.
- A player who creates legal screens in this restricted area, and who has been there for longer than 3 seconds causes an unfair advantage and must be called.
- A player who has been in the zone for longer than 3 seconds but has made a genuine attempt to leave this area & does not participate in the play must not be called for a 3 seconds violation.
- Once the ball has left the shooters hand for an attempted shot at goal, 3 seconds can no longer be called.
- 3 seconds cannot be called when rebounding.

## FIBA'S WORLD TECHNICAL COMMISSION INTERPRETATIONS – ADVANCED OFFICIATING

Again we discuss in detail rule interpretation as is explained by FIBA. Here they talk about “**Points of Emphasis**” - These are explanations and clarity to several areas in the rulebook, which in the past, have given rise to confusion, misinterpretation and inconsistencies in applying a rule.

### 1. Rough play away of the ball

Recently there has been a significant increase in the amount of physical contact away from the ball by defensive players. Any off-the-ball contact with the hand(s), arm(s), leg(s) or body should not be allowed if that contact:

- Impedes the progress of the offensive player
- Interferes with a player's freedom of movement.

If this is the case, illegal contact **away** from the ball affects offensive continuity and leads to an obvious advantage for the defence.

#### Examples:

- A4 is running for a fast break along the sideline. B4 places his hand on A4's hip, evidently **impeding** direct movement to the opponents' basket, thus gaining an advantage.
- Illegal use of hands **away** from the ball must be called not only on the drive to the opponents' basket but also during play close to the basket and whilst guarding a post player without the ball.

### 2. Too many fouls in the last minutes of the game

Over the last few years, personal fouls called against both teams in the last minutes or seconds of a tied game have become an all too common occurrence. Unfair tactics are being used in an attempt to stop the game for the price of a "normal" personal foul. The increasing number of free-throw attempts at both baskets causes the standard of play to decline and the appeal of the game to dwindle, with no attractive, spectacular action until just before the end of playing time.

In play such as this, officials are strongly advised to continue to apply the advantage/disadvantage principle strictly, at the same time trying not to interrupt the flow of the game, and to penalise a personal contact only when they believe that such contact:

- Gives an advantage to the player responsible,
- Places the opponent at a disadvantage,
- Becomes part of systematic contacts causing rough play to escalate.

*Remember: If a contact is not intentional and it does not place anyone at a disadvantage, do not blow the whistle!*

#### Examples:

- A4 dribbles and B4 runs after him with the intention of provoking physical contact and influencing the official to stop the game for the price of a "normal" foul.**

Contact occurs but A4 succeeds in retaining possession of the ball and continues his dribble. As there was no call from the officials, B4 runs after A4 again, this time making a more serious contact. The official reacts and calls a foul on B4 as repetition of this evidently intentional contact could lead to an unexpected nervous reaction from A4.

- Again a similar situation: A4 dribbles and B4 follows him, aiming to stop the game. Contact between A4 and B4 occurs but at the same time A4 succeeds in passing the ball to A5, etc.**

No call is made because in such a situation, nobody is placed at a disadvantage and the unfair tactic of trying to stop the game is either prevented or at least delayed.

### 3. Advantage/Disadvantage principles for violations

For the first time, under the new rules, the application of the advantage/disadvantage principle is officially legal not only for physical contacts but also for violations. This is considered quite revolutionary since it demands that the players, coaches and spectators change their way of thinking.

The officials are advised to apply this principle very carefully, trying at all times to neither lose game control nor to encourage poor technical play.

#### Examples:

- a. A4 receives the ball from a throw-in in team A's backcourt. There is no team B player anywhere in the vicinity of A4 in his backcourt. A4 lifts his pivot foot slightly before releasing the ball to begin a dribble.

**Ruling: The official could normally ignore the A4's action, especially if it is not exaggerated.**

- b. Repetition of the same infraction by A4 but with a defensive player in a position to pose a defensive threat to A4.

**Ruling: The presence of the defensive player creates an entirely different situation. The violation must be called (whistle by the official with the signal for "travelling") if we ignore this violation, an advantage would be unjustly given to the offensive player and the defensive player would be at a distinct disadvantage.**

- c. A4, pressed tightly by B4, dribbles the ball under his own basket with his back to the opponents' basket. At the same time his team mate A5 has been standing in the opponents' free-throw lane for more than 3 seconds.

**Ruling: The violation should be ignored by the officials, as there is no direct threat to team B.**

- d. Similar situation but A4 is progressing forward, facing the opponents' basket, and has the possibility of passing the ball to his team-mate A5 who has been standing in his opponents' free-throw lane for more than 3 seconds.

**Ruling: The violation shall be called because A5's position in the free-throw lane gives team A an unjust advantage**

### 4. Travel rule

One of the few inconsistently judged violations is that of Art. 35 Travelling. Players, coaches and fans are sometimes frustrated by the erratic and inconsistent application of this rule.

#### Advice to officials:

- Determine the pivot foot.
- Watch for illegal movement of that foot.

#### A) Which foot is the pivot foot?

- If a player receives the ball or ends a dribble with both feet on the floor, then he may choose either foot as his pivot foot.
- If a player receives the ball or ends a dribble with only one foot on the floor, the foot that is touching the floor is considered the pivot foot.
- If a player receives the ball or ends a dribble with neither foot touching the floor (airborne player), then the following guidelines apply:
  - a. If, after gaining control of the ball, one foot returns to the floor followed by the other foot, then the first foot to touch the floor becomes the pivot foot.
  - b. If, after gaining control of the ball, both feet return to the floor simultaneously, then the player may choose which foot is the pivot foot.
  - c. If, after gaining control of the ball, a fast moving player returns one foot to the floor, then leaps from that foot landing on both feet simultaneously, the action is legal, but the player may not pivot, i.e. neither foot is the pivot foot.

***Remember: It is impossible to travel whilst dribbling!***

**B) What restrictions limit the movement of a pivot foot?**

Once a pivot foot has been established, a player may begin a dribble, make a pass or attempt a shot for a field goal under the following restrictions:

- To begin a dribble, the ball must have first left the dribbler's hand before the pivot foot is lifted from the floor.
- To make a pass or a shot for a field goal, the pivot foot may be lifted before the ball is released for the pass or shot but the release must be completed before the pivot foot is returned to the floor.

Officials should be particularly strict in calling travelling violations especially if these violations could put the defence at a disadvantage!

Examples of typical travel violations:

- After having received the ball in the air A4 lands on one foot, leaps from that foot and lands again:
  - Simultaneously on both feet - legal action
  - Not simultaneously on both feet - travelling violation.
- After having received the ball in the air A4 lands on one foot then leaps from that foot and lands again on both feet simultaneously. Then A4 pivots on a lay-up drive towards the opponents' basket - travelling violation.
- A4 receives the ball whilst in a stationary position. Being closely pressed by B4, he steps backwards with his right foot towards B4, then quickly slides his left foot back. He then jumps and shoots - typical travelling violation often called as a foul by the defence.
- Changing the pivot foot by closely guarded post players. Post player A4 has the ball with his back towards the opponents' basket and is closely guarded by B4. A4 puts his foot behind B4's foot and then turns quickly by 180° leaving B4 behind him and begins a drive towards the opponents' basket. Strict attention should be given to such travel violations as any tolerance here normally gives an unfair advantage to the offence.
- The officials must, also closely watch illegal movements of the feet prior to executing a jump shot.
- Example: A4, from a static position or during a drive towards the opponents' basket, steps forward with one foot and then slides the pivot foot close to the first one before releasing the ball for a jump shot, thus nearing to the opponents' basket with one step.

**5. Hanging on the ring**

Hanging on the ring in such a way that the player's weight is supported by the ring, is in principle, not allowed by the rules and is penalised with a technical foul on the player.

Hanging on the ring is only allowed if:

- After a dunk, the player grasps the ring momentarily.
- The official believes that by doing so the **player is trying** to prevent injury to himself or to another player.

**Examples:**

- A4 scores with a spectacular dunk and then hangs momentarily for one or two seconds on the ring as an end to his dunk shot. This is considered as a legal action.
- A4 scores with a dunk. At the same time or immediately before, A5 or B5 slides and falls on the floor under the basket. A4 hangs on the ring in order not to cause injury to A5 or B5.
- A4 scores with a lay-up shot and then exaggeratedly hang on the ring for no valid reason (monkey play). A warning must be given, followed by a technical foul on the player. If the action is flagrant a technical foul shall be called immediately. ◇

## NTC PANEL REFEREE REQUIREMENTS

All panel referees are expected to maintain the following disciplines to ensure that our officiating remains consistent & professional. Inconsistency in officiating & lack of interpretation and updated ruling's seems to be the only gripe from coaches alike. As such uniformity must prevail.

1. All referees will dress the same when traveling & attending functions.  
Dress code is a blue blazer, white shirt, charcoal grey or black trousers, with black shoes & a Regional or National tie.
2. When officiating, the dress code is the NTC issued grey shirt with blue trimmings, black trousers, black socks and shoes. A black jacket will be worn before the start of the game and at half time.
3. Arrival at the venue will be **one hour** before the game begins. It is mandatory that you, your Partner & the Commissioner check the venue and technical equipment. The host team can now rectify any fault found before the game begins. It is not your job to fix things, but to bring to the hosts attention that such matters must be rectified before the game can commence!
4. A pre-meeting will take place some 40 minutes before the game starts with the Commissioner; (the team's captains and coaches are optional). Discuss the following:
  - Bench conduct & Captains duties
  - Preventative officiating
  - 3 second call
  - Advantage / disadvantage
  - Interference
  - Hand Checking & Contact Situations
  - Block & charge
5. The referees meeting will take place in private and you will discuss your zones, eye contact, line calls, lead & trail duties and mechanics. In cases of player or coaches dispute be prepared to call the technical for and on behalf of your fellow official. Report to the table 20 minutes before game starts
6. With 6 minutes to go, call off the teams for player & official's announcement (if any), otherwise follow the 5, 3, & 1minute calls. After the announcements, (if any) a 3-minute call is given. On 1 minute, call the teams from the court and insure that the table is ready to play. At half time a 10 or 15-minute interval is allowed. With 5 minutes left of the half time interval, call 5 minutes, 3 minutes and a 1-minute call before starting the next half. For extra time, a 2-minute interval is given before the period begins.
7. Team player's shirts will be tucked in at all times when playing. No excuses will be accepted. Begin by verbally warning the players & if your preventative officiating is ignored, result to a technical violation as the last resort.
8. A hand raised as in the "stop" action warns a player or coach who shows decent or misconduct.  
  
***Note: The "MAFIBA" look and a cautionary verbal warning follow this. If the player / coach insists with his actions thereafter, it is considered that he has had his 3 warnings which must then be punished by a technical foul.***
9. Do not get into a verbal dispute with spectator, player or coach.

### 10. Signals

Signals must be clear and identifiable by spectator and the bench alike. A foul signal is administrated with a clenched fist reaching upwards and a straight arm pointed between the players mid drift & chest from a maximum distance of some 3 meters. To avoid confusion, do not point at his feet, ground or at his belt line. Look at him in the eyes and hold the call for at least 3 seconds. All other signals to the table should be administered in front of the chest, just below the eye line. Practice in front of a mirror.

## 11. Interference

These calls are made by the trial official only. The rule is precise and must be called as such. "The ball must be on its downward flight above the level of the rim and it must be evident that it will enter the basket. After the ball has touched the **backboard above the level of the rim**, it is an offence and the basket is,

- Good - should the defensive player touch the ball, backboard, ring, net or struts
- Not good - should the offensive player touch the ball, backboard, ring, net or struts."

## 12. Preventative officiating:

The whistle is used to control the game. However, if you can warn the player verbally or by action, before making the call, and you are successful in this manner, then use preventative officiating to allow the free flow of the game.

## 13. The 3 second call:

If a player gains an advantage by being in the "3-second zone" – (restricted area), for more than 3 seconds, it is a violation. However, if he is not participating in the play, warn him to leave this area. If he fails to heed your preventative officiating, then call the violation.

If he is in this restricted area for longer than 3 seconds and receives a pass, or a shot is about to be taken, the call must be made to ensure that no advantage is gained by his actions. Try always to signal the **3-second** count.

## 14. Advantage /disadvantage

There is no advantage in basketball therefore, if a player or coach, gains an advantage by using illegal actions or tactics, then it must be called as a violation immediately.

Contact on a player with or without the ball must be of such a nature that it places that person at a disadvantage. If contact results in loss of continuous motion or in loss of control of the ball, a violation has occurred and must be called. Contact on the shooter, unless this contact is in its verticality and considered legal, must always be called. Protect the shooter.

## 15. Point allocation in shooting situations

It is deemed that where the ball was last touched will determine the point allocation of that basket. E.g. A 3-pt attempt is made. An Offensive or Defensive player who is in the 2 pt area, interferes with this shot. The basket scored will now result in 2 points and not three. This comes in line with a shot rebounding off the ring and then tapped in. Where the ball was last touched determines the point allocation.

## 16. Block and charge:

The criteria of a legal block is that the defender must be facing the opponent either by standing still in a legal guarding position, moving in a backward motion, a lateral motion or be in the air in his verticality when contact by the offensive player is on the **torso**.

The Principle's which the official must look for are the following.

- a) **Referee the defense** (if the defense follows the above criteria, he is legal)
- b) On contact, was the **defensive player moving forward**? If the answer is **yes**, an illegal block must be called.
- c) Where was contact?  
If contact is on the **shoulder, arms or knees** and the defensive player placed the offensive player at a **disadvantage**, and then an illegal block must be called. But if the offensive player was not placed at a disadvantage, then there is no call and the signal for "play on" is given.
- d) Did the defensive player occupy the space in front of the offensive player **before** the offensive player left the floor in the act of shooting? If the answer is **yes, it is a charge**. If **no**, then it is an **illegal block**.
- e) Under all other circumstances, if the defensive player is legal, then the offensive player has committed a charge.

## 17. Hand checking.

A hand on the body does not constitute a foul unless it prevents the opponent from moving freely. Preventative officiating must be exercised before calling. Two hands on the body is an immediate violation and is called as a hand checking foul.

We will call hand checking in the following manner:

- If the ball is in the backcourt, and it is a one on one situation, hand checking must be controlled and called only if it results in a disadvantage situation for the offensive player.
- Hand checking in the front court especially on the drive must be called with out any hesitation. Remember to call in the **spirit** of the game.

The hand is considered part of the ball. Therefore, a check on the hand is not a foul. You must demonstrate this when it occurs so that player, bench and spectator can see that you have seen the action and identified that it is not a foul.

## 18. 24 seconds

The 24-second clock will be stopped only when the ball comes in contact with the rim and reset when either offence or defense has regained possession of the ball. Other criteria's, which affect the 24-second reset, are as follows:

- Intentional foulball
- Turn over
- Foul
- Jump ball
- Referees instruction

## 19. Unsportsmanlike foul.

The rule as stated before 1994 was an Intentional Foul and this foul constituted an intentional and deliberate act where force was the criteria for the call.

This rule was updated to avoid this controversial interpretation. An Unsportsmanlike foul is only called on a player who **fouls the man to stop the game without a bona fide attempt** to play the ball.

This insured that the interpretation was of an Unsportsmanlike Act and force was not the principle applied to the call. The criteria for calling the foul, was an act that was deemed "unsportsmanlike" or not in the "spirit of the game" (ie) – playing the man and not the ball.

## 20. Technical foul

This rule was introduced to avoid a team or player from gaining an unfair advantage during a dead ball or stopped ball situation or any violation that does not involve an infraction on the player. The penalty is one shot plus side line possession.

Examples of technical fouls are:

- By disallowing the clock to restart – deliberate time delay
- Deliberately preventing the ball from being put into play
- Decent towards an official / abusive language etc
- Kicking the ball or chair in anger

## 21. Principle of verticality

A player is entitled to jump up and land in the spot directly beneath him. As long as his legs and arms are in this verticality, (approximately shoulder width in circumference) any other player entering this area violates his space and if such action's causes a disadvantage to the player, a foul must be called. Should any part of the body be out of the alignment of this verticality, and contact occurs, this player will then be called for a foul. We will call this a blocking foul. All calls are based on the advantage disadvantage rule.

## 22. Substitutions

All substitutions must be seated at the table before being allowed onto the court. The sub must enter the court, when called by the referee. The subbed player may leave from anywhere on the court. Should a player get up and leave the sub chair then he has indicated that he does not want a substitution any more and such sub is withdrawn. A player may leave the bench and go to the toilet with out requesting permission from the referee. Substitutions are called on any foul, jump ball, or teams side ball.

## 23. Time outs

All time-out period's, are requested only by the coach or his assistant. (ie)1 time out per quarter in the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter and 2 time outs in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. All extra periods are entitled to 1 time out per team. Time outs are called on any stop ball with one exception to the rule. When a basket is scored a time out by the defensive team may call the time out as long as it was requested before the act of shooting commenced.

## 24. Rules for National & Regional Competitions (year 2000 - 2002)

- 4 x 10-minute quarters, with two-minute intervals between each quarter.
- 10 – 15 minute half time
- 5 fouls per player
- 5 team fouls per quarter (on the 5<sup>th</sup> foul shoot for basket)
- 8 second back court violation  
24 second shot clock
- Clock stopped in last 2 minutes of final quarter after every basket & in all extra periods
- One time out per quarter except in the final quarter where 2 time outs are allowed per team
- One time out in each extra period per team
- All other rules pertain to FIBA as per the 1998 – 2002 rule changes

## 25. Conclusion

The importance of the referees on-court actions and signals are identified as a non-verbal communication link between officials, spectator, player and coaches alike. It has therefore become necessary in certain incidences to display unauthorodoxed signal's to show that you have identified the action and have allowed the play to continue. When you can, prevent the whistle and allow the game to flow; as long as it does not create an advantageous or disadvantageous situation, and that it has followed the principles of the game. Referee in the spirit of the game & adapt to the modern officiating methods. Enjoy yourself & remember to smile.

## QUESTION & ANSWERS

**Question: (From Steve Dymond – Cape Town)**

**A1 shoots the ball. While the ball is in the air, A2 & B2 are involved in a double foul. The ball passes through the ring. Both teams have accumulated team fouls. What do you call?**

Tough situation, good question! Ball is live and in the air before the double foul, therefore two points to A1 must be given. A Double foul is called & Personal fouls are recorded on both A2 & B2. Under the old rules a jump ball would be called. Under the new rules, possession would go to team B at the base line.

Thanks Steve. (Aren't we just brilliant! Ed)

**Question: (From George Tsafandakis – Gauteng North)**

**How do you handle an uncontrollable situation (Blowout) on court?**

A blowout is a common term used when a game suddenly becomes totally uncontrollable and results in an ugly situation from a coach, player or spectator where a fight either breaks out or the referee is abused.

All top referees around the world will tell you that a blowout happens so fast and when it does, it is totally uncontrollable. It is a very dangerous situation to be in and you have to allow common sense to prevail at the time to handle this problem as amicably as possible. Here are a few points to help you identify and defuse a possible BLOWOUT!

- Have a “feel for the game” anticipating possible situations and defuse them before they start.
- Preventative officiating normally controls a situation before it erupts.
- Listen to the complaints of players and coaches and react once you have identified them.
- Never argue with player or coach, but lend a sympathetic ear to their concerns
- Slow down the game when it slips from your control (it relaxes everyone).
- Punish all deliberate and unsportsmanlike play severely immediately.
- Don't allow emotion to dictate your calls. Stay calm.
- Get between the players who have intention to fight quickly and caution them severely.
- Always call the captains and warn them of possible repercussions if the problem reoccurs, and then act on what you have said by calling the tech or unsportsmanlike.
- Should a fight break out, and you have no control, stand back and take note of the offenders and award the punishment accordingly.

No one can tell you how to handle a blow out. It's like sex for the first time, you both 'screw it up' and learn by your mistakes, or you're totally in control and prepared for the encounter. Good luck with the next blowout!

**Question: (From Loredana Lisinski – Gauteng Marian College)**

**How do you react without making a big scene about everything, when players and the bench in particular, make snide comments about yours and your partners refereeing?**

This is a normal situation that results with officials who are inexperienced and coaches who are unfortunately undisciplined. Sadly though, you as the referee, have to make an impact on the game and put the bench & its coach in its rightful place, because from snide comments becomes unruly situations and you may then have to contend with a blowout! (Issue discussed in edition 2) This is not an easy task, as you become the unpopular referee but remember you are not out there to win a popularity contest!

Firstly, stop the game at an opportune moment & call the captain to you your side. Ask him to talk to his team and refrain from making such comments about the refereeing. Don't become emotional and be very serious when talking to him/her. Should this badgering continue then make an example of the coach and his bench.

Stop the game and approach the coach. The mentor of many an aspiring referee, Mr. Kotlebo, a FIBA instructor, explains – ‘ that with a smile on your face & in a loud and audible voice, (so that every one can hear) tell the coach in a friendly manner that if his bench continues with these unsavory comments, you would be forced to punish him for his benches unruly conduct and you would hate to do that & would really appreciate his cooperation’. (We call this the Americo smile or grimace, we are not that sure if Americo actually smiles or grimaces . . .)

Should a further outburst take place then immediately punish the bench by a technical violation.

It is as simple as that Lorendana. Remember, you are the referee of the game. To allow this unsavory action to take place means that you condone it! This in turn results in all referees after you, having to endure the same humiliation by a bunch of undisciplined players and coaching staff.

**Question: (From Naftal Chongo – Gauteng Metro)**

**What do you do when senior referees criticized you in front of your colleagues, players and the public alike?**

Naftal, I cannot envisage a more embarrassing moment for a young up & coming referee to endure. This type of criticism either result's in the confidence of an official destroyed or will just downright embarrass & chase him away from the referee circuit! Senior referees should know better and should discuss these matters with you confidentially, counseling you in private & telling you where you are making mistakes and how to rectify them.

I would handle such concerns in the following way. Firstly, confront your colleague and ask him to take you away from the masses. Explain to him that you respect him/her as a senior official and as such, would expect them to be professional enough to constructively criticize you in private.

Remember though, there is playful teasing and there is downright blunt criticism, & you must differentiate and then make comment. You have a good refereeing future, good luck!

**Question: (From Graeme Cartwright – SA Master Association)**

**Help me, I recently called a football violation during league and was confronted by various interpretations. What is the correct definition of a football?**

It is the deliberate and intentional act of trying to stop the ball with the foot. Any accidental contact, such as bouncing the ball off the foot should be ignored. (The new ruling after the Sidney Olympics 2000 will state that any deliberate contact of the ball with any part of the leg will constitute a football violation. The call is – ‘stop the clock, point to the foot (signal for football) and show the direction of play as per signal No. 22’

**Question: (From Leana Pool – Gauteng North)**

**A very clever play by the Pretoria University team is called the “line out”. The team lines up behind one another during an out of bounds throw-in and on passing in the ball, one player runs out and the other two assist in picking up the third player who receives the ball and passes to his colleague who has set himself up for a lay up or set shot. Is this legal?**

FIBA says yes, as long as there is no contact or violation of the traveling or 3 second rulings. The player lifted, must pass off the ball and not try and score from this elevated position as this is then not in the spirit of the game. Likewise, any player who is assisted in dunking a ball, i.e. pushing off from the shoulder of a teammate, or being lifted towards the basket, is considered as gaining an advantage and should be disallowed. The call in such incidences is - the canceling of the basket and change of possession with the signal of a sideline violation called.

**Question: (From Brian Ayson, Wheelchair Basketball)**

**Explain the legalities of when & what to protest?**

Sadly, a number of protests have raised its ugly head in recent CBL and Wheelchair basketball games. Firstly, should a referee, who by past or recent association with a club, be allowed to referee such games then, is a protest valid in this case? Secondly, on what grounds can a protest take place and what can a team protest for? All protests are based on technical issues only. (I.e. technical equipment failure, scoreboard errors, spectator interference etc.)

However, a recent event involving wheelchair basketball resulted in judgment calls by referee Brian Ayson and Stacy Gomm being protested on the grounds that it disadvantaged the team in the game. This is unheard of, as a referee's judgment cannot be questioned. Bias on the other hand can, but must be proven. The rule is precise and procedures must take place. At the time of the incident, the coach or team captain must clearly make his intentions felt and is entitled to call a time out to question the referee. In such cases if the question is valid the referee will withdraw the time out and correct the error. If the team is incorrect, the team will be charged with a time out and in event that the team has no further time outs, a technical foul will be charged to the coach.

In the event of a referee who has prior association with a club or team, it is advised that, that official withdraw from officiating that team to avoid confrontation and accusation of bias, which may bring his integrity into question. However, the NTC will nominate panel referees at its discretion when allocation is required on the bases that all referees are neutral.

**Question: (From Charles Foster – Gauteng Central)**

**A player is on the way to score a basket and fumbles. He stops and throws the ball against the backboard to gain the advantage of recovering the ball and then continues to score. Is this legal?**

Old rules (1999) – Absolutely NOT!

New rules (2000) - The interpretation allows the player to now use the backboard as above except when shooting a free throw.

**On the 2<sup>nd</sup> free throw, the ball rolls off the ring and settles on the ring support and backboard. Can the offence or defense play the ball?**

No, this is a jump ball situation where the referee will nominate two players of equal stature to participate in a jump ball at the free throw line.

**The player takes the shot from outside the 3-point area and the lead referee calls the 3 seconds after the ball has left the offences hand. The basket sinks and would have resulted in that team winning the game. What do you do as the trail referee?**

Firstly, this call should never be made. The communication & eye contact between officials is vital in the last crucial seconds of any game, however, this situation does occur & you should be ready for it.

It is our opinion that the trail official should blow his whistle to stop the game immediately and confront with his partner confidentially. If his partner is still adamant, then the commissioner should also be consulted before a final decision is made. Unfortunately, if his partner is the designated referee, and he is still adamant of his call, then his decision is final.

**Please note:** We do not advocate that the Umpire questions the referee's judgment in any way except in special situations where honesty, integrity and genuine mistake are highlighted. Also take note that the referee's decision is final.

**Situation: (Charles Saunders – National Technical Commission)**

**What do you call when the 24-second buzzer sounds whilst the ball is in the air after a shot, and the following occurs:**

- **The ball touches the backboard or ring, and enters the basket.**  
The rule is clear and states Basket good & game continues from the baseline
- **The ball touches the backboard or ring but does not enter the basket**  
It's a 24-second violation and the ball is taken from the closest spot to where the shot took place
- **The ball strikes the ring and rebounds vertically & enters the basket**  
No basket, call the 24-second violation and the ball is taken from the closest spot to where the shot took place
- **The ball is touched on its upward flight by either team A or B**  
A 24-second violation is called and the ball is taken from the closest spot to where the shot took place

**Situation: (Charles Saunders – National Technical Commission)**

**10 seconds on the clock in overtime, and team A cause an unsportsmanlike foul resulting in team B shooting 2 plus possession. Team A scores and ties the game. On entering the play and with 4 seconds remaining, team A steals the ball and is fouled on the lay-up resulting in the call but, simultaneously, the end of the game buzzer is signaled. Players and coach protest that the buzzer sounded before the whistle. What do you do?**

**Comment:**

To avoid controversy in any game, you are advised not to complicate the situation. But in incidences where you have made a call and events lead to confrontation, my advice is to consult your colleague immediately with the commissioner, and clarify the situation and make a decision regardless. For example, pertaining to this incident, it was confirmed by commissioner & timekeeper that the whistle was simultaneous with the buzzer; therefore, team B administered the shots. The important aspect of this situation being, that you can only make a decision on the facts presented without emotion. Being honest and neutral will serve you in the future.

**Question: (Ricky Mendoza from KZN)**

**What do you call when, just before the end of the game, when A1 is in the air on his way to the basket, B2 fouls him in the act of shooting the ball. The basket however misses, and simultaneously, as the buzzer sounds, A1 retaliates and hits B2. The score is a 2 points difference in favor of team B.**

Well, what a scenario because, this call leans towards 'special situations' at the end of a game!

**Scenario – 'ref calls an unsportsmanlike foul after the shot and as the buzzer sounds off.'**

- a. There is a foul in the act of shooting against B2 therefore team A will have two shots at goal.
- b. Simultaneously, an unsportsmanlike foul was called against A1 for hitting a player & B2 has two shots plus sideline possession.

- c. Special situations enforced ONLY at the end of a game, allows the referee to cancel teams A's two shots & team B's two shots irrespective of being 'like' fouls, because there is no possession to start the game.
- d. Score will remain the same and the referee will sign off the score sheet.

**'Question':***(Lee Jardine, a former student from Bishop Bavin Schools referee development structure, now refereeing in the Gauteng Chinese League)*

**In a game that I refereed, two people from opposite teams were hassling for the ball in the middle of the Court on the half way line. One was on the ground while the other was trying to grab it from him. The opposition puts his foot over the halfway line. Do I call a backcourt violation on him, even though he is fighting for the ball?**

**Ruling:**

Thanks for your question Lee. These incidences happen whenever there is a half court press applied on the ball carrier and normally he panics causing such situations. However, where two people are on the floor fighting for the ball, it is good practice to call the jump ball immediately. As stated in my last article, try and avoid confrontational situations especially where complications can occur.

**Comment:**

But, you are quite correct in saying that a backcourt infringement took place, however, it is our recommendation and good practise to call the jump ball immediately when people are fighting for the ball on the ground. It avoids bad situations and also in the spirit of the game, gives both teams the opportunity to compete fairly. Remember, sell the call by blowing the whistle quickly & sharply, indicate the jump ball signal and point to both players and to the nearest circle (in this case the centre circle).

**Question (Merlin Knott – Gauteng Metro – Club Scorpions)**

**The official, gave a double technical while the ball was in play, When queried he replied that both were on the bench and not on any player and he awarded shooting 4. What is the correct call & can I protest the call**

**Additionally, a similar violation where 6 shots were awarded for 2 techs on one player and a third on a second player all in the same phase of play.**

Good question's raised. It shows the technical advancement of the game and how good or poor officiating could affect the out come of a game.

Remember a protest follows a procedure – your captain must make formal protest during or after the game by signing the score sheet before the referee signs it off. R 500.00 is also put down on protest, which is returned if you win or forfeited, if you lose the enquiry. If this procedure is not followed, the game cannot be considered for a replay and only reviewed as a technical enquiry.

**1st Scenario - 'technical fouls during special situations' i.e. (during intervals of play - that is before the start of the game, between quarters or at half time & extra periods) and in any fighting situations**

The tech or disqualification thrown is awarded on the player & shown as such on the score sheet next to his / her name, but is also marked next to the coach as a *Bench Tech*. It does not effect the team foul situation. Irrespective of the number of techs or disqualifications thrown during this period, only **2 shots plus possession** can be awarded.

**2nd Scenario - 'Consecutive Tech's thrown during a game on a player, the bench or Coach'** will result in the accumulation of fouls.

If the ref claimed that the call was on the bench & not on the coach then so be it. It is however his /her interpretation and the semantics on arguing the point is of no consequence. For the record, if it was on the player on court & not on the bench then the number of shots given will basically alter from 2 to 1.

In this scenario, 2 consecutive technical fouls on the bench were given. It must be shown as -

**2 x Techs in the coach's foul blocks as Bench Techs**

**The Techs will be written with symbol T with a small B indicating bench tech. T with a C indicates Coach Tech.**

The difference between both symbols is if it was a double Coach Tech, then the coach would be disqualified immediately. In this case, **the penalty is 2 shots plus sideline possession for each tech given.**  
The referee was correct in giving 4 shots plus sideline possession.

## **2nd Scenario**

Likewise where technical fouls are awarded during the game and not during an interval of play, whether they are on one or more players on the court, the penalty will result as follows:

**Where a Technical foul on a player on the court is given, the penalty is 1 shot plus possession.**

Here it is said three techs were called simultaneously on players in the court. The penalty should be 3 shots plus possession.

I however understand that the player was disqualified on the 2nd tech & a third tech given on another player.

Therefore the following penalty should result. **Total penalty awarded - 4 shots plus possession.**

- **Technical foul - 1 shot plus possession**
- **Disqualification - 2 shots plus possession**
- **Technical foul - 1 shot plus possession**

The referee was incorrect in giving the number of shots for the penalties scribed & you could have protested this game had you followed correct procedures

### **Question ( Peter Tranter – Metro Gauteng Table Official)**

**A couple of technical queries that were raised yesterday that I cannot find in the FIBA May 5th 2000 rules - hope you can answer them:-**

- 1. A coach could ask for more than 1 charged time out in a period (1-3) provided that he accepted a technical foul – this was mentioned to me some years ago by the Australian table official who gave a few clinics at Metro. What is the present ruling.**
- 2. There was an impression by a number of players that if a player receives 2 technical fouls then he was suspended from play - the rule book only states the player is suspended when there are a total number of 5 fouls against him, be they technical or personal. What is the ruling?**

In answer to your 1<sup>st</sup> question, - The rules clearly state that there is 1 time out per 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, & 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter with 2 time outs in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. Should a coach request this additional time out, the table can warn him of his mistake. If the coach continues to insist on this time out the table can give it but will inform the referee immediately who will then sanction a technical foul on the coach and game will resume without time out.

The penalty of course - the coach is charged with a technical foul, and indicated as a coach tech and 2 shots plus half way side line possession is awarded to the opposition.

**Your second question is a good one. Referees & players alike do not know this.**

A player can have 5 technical fouls as the rule clearly states as long as they are not consecutive which results then in disqualification.

In other words – Player A kicks the ball & is sanctioned a technical foul for bad behavior, he then swears at the official. A second technical foul can be awarded for decent. He thereafter shows decent again by throwing the ball at the official. It is advisable to now disqualify showing necessary discipline.

Penalty- 4 shots plus possession to team B

- 1<sup>st</sup> Tech – one shot plus side line possession for team B
- 2<sup>nd</sup> tech – one shot plus side line possession for team B
- Disqualification – two shots plus side line possession for team B

However a player could receive 5 technical fouls for different infringements of the rule at different time of the game – example

- Decent to an official
- Kicking the ball into the crowd
- Illegal swinging on the rim
- Leaving the court to gain an advantage
- Decent again

The penalty is of course the same per violation caused. One shot plus side line possession for the opposite team.

### **RULING WITHOUT ENQUIRY**

As within Able Body Officiating, during the U18 Championships, an incident arose with referee Vilen Naiker from Durban who objected to staying at accommodation in Southgate for security reasons, and has been punished by BSA (by being not allowed to participate in the recent U18 African Challenge in Durban) for his actions – and all this, **before being brought to an enquiry about the incident and without representation or reasoning**. The shameful part about this debacle is that the NTC has done nothing in trying to find a resolution and has allowed a ruling to take place without an enquiry into the matter.

So has a similar incident occurred in Wheelchair Basketball except that the Wheelchair Technical Commission has the guts to stand up for its conviction? Stacy Gomm and Francisco Bailey, whilst refereeing a Supersport Series game, became involved in a dispute with the Saints team. As such, the Western Cape Wheelchair Basketball Association has ruled that they do not wish to have these officials involvement in any further games involving them. All this was stipulated without so much as an enquiry involving these officials to settle this dispute.

Now, I ask all the parties involved in both cases, surely your objective here is to insure that a resolution (no matter what the findings) of the facts is establish, and by bring the matter to an enquiry, an opinion and ruling can then be formulated. By your actions, the mere fact that you refuse to follow normal disciplinary enquiry principals & procedures, has made a mockery of our Constitutions. Shame on you!

### **PROTESTS**

Lately, the CBL and Wheelchair basketball leagues have been confronted by protests. Some valid, but others highlight the incessant need to understand the logistics of a protest.

What is a Protest? The Oxford English Dictionary explains it as a **'formal statement of dissent or disapproval'**.

In basketball terms its defined as follows **' if a team believes that its interest have been adversely affected by a decision of an official (referee or umpire) or by any event that took place during a game, a team may protest under the following conditions.** (Summarized version Pg 86 of 98, Official Basketball Rules & Game Procedures 1998 - 2001)

- As soon as possible after the incident, either when the ball is dead or at the first time out, the captain or coach, in a calm & courteous manner, shall make his observations to the referee. (The rule allows the Coach to call a time out to raise such concerns keeping in mind though, that Art 19 – Time out rule is followed)
- The referee may explain his decision or examine the score sheet, score & time, depending on the query.
- If the interruption exceeds 30 seconds, it shall be charged as a time out to the team in question, unless the referee recognizes the validity of the observation and shall decide otherwise.

As noted, the interpretation of a Protest is not defined in the rules as is normally explained in technical clinics held by FIBA / IWBF (Able body & Wheelchair Mother Organizations) or by the Federations Instructors.

One such incident involving the Wheelchair Basketball Team, the Capetown Saints, protested a game on Brian Ayson's Judgment calls. This is a classic case of ill judgment by the Coach and his Captain because a valid team protest will be viewed only for a technical nature!

Remember, *factors that involve incorrect court, equipment, or technical specifications, incorrect table officiating concerning stop clock errors, incorrect time keeping, safety & security*, and not, as many believe, on a referees call, can be protested with valid results.

As defined in the rulebook, the referee shall make the final decision on any point not specified in the rules. The International Technical Commission feels so strongly on this matter that it has introduced a further ruling in Art 32, specifying that a team cannot use video footage to change the result of the game, because a referee's judgment call is exactly that, his judgment at that time, in that situation.

This however does not mean that the referee is above the law, and the rulebook allows coaches and captains to bring such errors to a correctable state in Art 60, '**Correctable Errors**', It further allows them to put in formal reports on the referees conduct if deemed necessary. These matters must then be reviewed by the technical powers that be, and that official will be dealt with accordingly if such decision warrants it.

The procedure in protesting a game, is as follows:

- As defined above, the protest can be made immediately at the time of the incident or at the end of the game before the referee signs off the score sheet. Pg 85 (8.2.10.5) refers – **the referee shall be the last to sign the score sheet, and this act terminates the administration of the game!**
- The captain shall sign the score sheet before the referee signs off the score sheet in the place marked "Captains signature in case of protest", and shall furnish within 20 minutes to the federation in writing, confirmation of this protest with a R 500.00 deposit (FIBA DM 500.00)
- Here an enquiry (based on the procedures of a normal industrial enquiry) takes place. Argument by the complainant, counter argument by the defense, witness statements etc, all overheard by the Chairperson who makes a final decision.
- If the protest is accepted, the money is refunded. In cases of appeal, the matter is referred to the Jury of Appeal, and is accompanied by a deposit of R 1000.00, (DM 1000.00). Here the decision is final.

A prime example of a justifiable protest was a decision made at a CBL game in Pretoria. The game was protested on the bases of a referees association with a team (Club).

George Tsafandakis, (Tasman for short), was appointed to officiate in a game where his participation was questioned as a result of his past association with the University of Pretoria. This matter was raised before the game started and was duly noted.

The visitors lost the game and so protested on these grounds and won. The technical administration contravened Art 5 (5.4) by appointing Tasman to a game in which he had prior association with that team. Ironically, bias was never questioned but the protest was on Art 5, which simply states '**It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the referee and umpire of a given game, cannot be connected in any way with either of the organizations represented on the court.** His neutrality had to be questioned.

This unfortunately raises other concerns especially when Officials take on positions such as Chairman of organizations, and then are placed into predicaments by compromising their neutrality by refereeing such games where their province participates. Another example is when a referee officiates teams containing family members or working partners as players or coaches. Further more, questions must be raised when officials are seen fraternizing with players & coaches before or after a game. The referee, when confronted with such predicaments, must immediately withdraw himself from the game thus disallowing his integrity to be placed in question. Neutrality is the ultimate principal in officiating and must be respected as such.

In the event of a referee who has prior association with a club or team, it is advised that, that official withdraw from officiating that team to avoid confrontation and accusation of bias, which may bring his integrity into question. However, the NTC will nominate panel referees at its discretion when allocation is required on the bases that all referees are neutral

### **CONFLICT OF OPINION**

Pay or not to be paid! That is the question! (Or rather the controversy that surrounds officiating in basketball in South Africa today)

Once again, the Officials standpoint is brought into the spotlight when monitory matters are discussed. Do we take the viewpoint that Referees & Table Officials should officiate for the love of the game or should officials be paid for the job that they do?

As a referee who unfortunately has found it difficult to conform to narrow minded Administrative idealisms when it comes to the Technical aspects of the game, I believe that officials should be paid for the job at hand. And why not!

The majority of Senior Officials around the country have achieved seniority because of the experience gained from not only studying the Fiba handbooks, but serious dedication, family sacrifice, preparation and achieving set criteria required by our National Technical Commission (NTC).

For the love of the game you say – Oh yes, but this for some, has not been an overnight achievement but years of serious commitment & personal cost.

It takes an average referee some 3- 5 years to achieve a 1<sup>st</sup> grade license. This is after passing a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, table officiating and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade examination.

The criteria of 30 registered games per season per grade are required before the official can apply to become a National 2<sup>nd</sup> grade referee. (I ask you, how many leagues in this country run this amount of games for the referee to achieve these requirements in 1 year) And, take note, this is only achievable if that official then attends a National competition and passes a practical grading of 3 court games graded by a National Instructor.

The official then undergoes a medical examination, fitness test (some 2.8 km of court sprints), written and 3 practical court examinations of which an 80% pass rate is required, before being graded as a 1<sup>st</sup> grade referee.

A further 2 years is gaining experience at high-level competition before that official can be considered for International candidacy. Here, very few officials make the grade, but they continue, yes, because they love the game!

The arguments for and against are many. Pay or not to be paid. Good administrators see the value of having a sound technical administration of dedicated well experienced officials, because from good officials comes good discipline (which we lack seriously in South Africa Basketball)

A further requirement of an official at this level is that he or she must be neutral. Therefore, that official has to disassociate itself with any team or Association. The sacrifice of giving up playing, coaching, national selection, etc is at stake. This is a serious decision for a young candidate and one that is lonely and unpopular. Friendships are often strained and decisions cause much heart sore. But the plight of the official is immensely important to the improvement of basketball in any country.

In past years, (well nothing has changed much today) officials endure spectator, coach & player abuse, they were beaten, spat on, cars tampered with, and threatened. No protection was ever offered. (And in some countries where protection is offered, one only hopes that it is you whom they offer protection to) Would you do this for no pay today!

The world over, pay's officials from all sports because they are aware of the importance of having a professional, neutral body of specialized people who make the difference between losing or winning on bias officiating. It is sad that our mother body is still battling with this debate.

Taking all of this into consideration, I ask you again, is it not worth paying for experience or are you actually content with poor officiating!

## **THE PBL STORY**

For five years, from 1994 to 1998, the professional PREMIER BASKETBALL LEAGUE (PBL) produced high quality games around the country, which were featured on National peak-hour sports programs, raising public awareness of the Sport of Basketball to levels previously unknown. Praised by most, vilified by some, the time has come to take an honest look at the facts, and to establish whether any of the allegations made against the PBL were justified or not.

Not surprisingly, individuals resentful of the this fact, voiced most of the allegations that their wishes to participate, could not all be accommodated at this early stage of the establishment of the Professional League, as can be evidenced by the nature of their allegations:

- The PBL existed for the benefit of a few individuals and clubs.

- It was “elitist”.
- It was controlled by a “cabal” / two clubs / a few individuals.
- It contributed nothing to “development”.
- It was mismanaged.

## WHAT ARE THE TRUE FACTS?

By mutual agreement in 1994 between five clubs and Basketball South Africa (BSA), the prime purpose for the establishment of the PBL on a franchise purchasing basis was “*to provide the highest possible level of competition between basketball teams in the large towns and cities of South Africa*”, launched by the financial contributions of the five original clubs.

Every detail of how this was to be achieved was set out in two main documents:

- **The PBL Participants Agreement** (BSA being a Participant with the five original clubs), and
- **The PBL Rules and Regulations.**

Both these documents were screened by BSA, were modified to suit BSA, and signed by all six Participants. Subsequently, new Franchisees (Capetown Eagles, Soweto Panthers, Capetown Kings and Pretoria Suns) all signed a special Assumption Deed document binding them to the original Agreement. All these documents set out in great detail the rights as well as the responsibilities and obligations of all the Participants.

Modeling the PBL on the very successful Australian NBL and drawing from their 12 years of valuable experience saved South African basketball at least five years of trial and error. As in Australia, the PBL was **tasked to manage and operate the professional league in accordance with the agreed guidelines, on a commercial basis, with BSA and the Clubs as Shareholders.** (ala the Participants Agreement).

The purpose of adopting this format in Australia was to allow Basketball Australia (ala BSA) to concentrate on growing the sport at Developmental levels, promoting Amateur and Semi-Professional Club Competitions on a National level, and raising the quality of its National teams in both genders and in all ages.

For a country without a long culture of basketball, unlike South Africa, Basketball Australia has achieved enormous success on all these levels. We have to ask, why has BSA not followed suit?

## WHO REALLY BENEFITED FROM THE PBL?

Primarily the sport of Basketball, like never before, and certainly not since the PBL was forced to delay its league competition in 1999 (*thanks to the efforts of BSA to get the PBL sponsors to withdraw their support for the professional league*), has there been so much high profile basketball shown on National TV, or covered in all Regional media. For a year and a half now, this valuable exposure has been lost at a huge cost to the sport, and this for one reason only, because certain individuals on the BSA Executive (who have since departed!) were unhappy with the fact that BSA was not in total control of the PBL and its sponsorship funding. The BSA CEO and other BSA Executive members, sadly openly admitted this fact at PBL Board meetings.

The PBL, for its part, made certain that it conducted all its affairs absolutely correctly, and in line with the Participants Agreement and PBL Rules and Regulations & these Documents made it impossible for any club or individual, to take advantage of them for their own benefit. Any allegation to the contrary can be proven to be false beyond any possible doubt!

## THE PBL - WAS IT ELITIST!

The dictionary defines the word “elite” as “*being the best, the most prominent*”.

Every sports academy is elitist. Every national team is elitist. The soccer PSL is elitist. Identifying new talent among the youth and affording them specialized training is elitist, yet every sport looking to its future is doing it. Since when has “elite” been a dirty word?

## THE FRANCHISE SYSTEM – WHY NOT RELEGATION?

The success of the American NBA and the Australian NBL is due in great part to their use of the “franchise” system, which requires club owners and shareholders to invest in a commercial venture (with no guarantees), and to promote their investment with a view to possibly seeing benefits many years down the line. In the early years of its establishment, and at the insistence of BSA, the PBL was urged to consolidate rather than expand, although special

efforts were made to include a team from Soweto as soon as possible in recognition of the need for representation of previously disadvantaged areas.

Contrary to some of the allegations, the Franchise system is open to all, subject to certain requirements stipulated by BSA of satisfying the need for geographical spread, financial and administrative capability, community support, the ability to present a team of commensurate quality, and a technically suitable venue.

Few people are aware of the level of funds required for a club to contract two quality foreign players, (to accommodate and transport them) as well as the ten local players, plus, cover numerous other costs required to prepare the team and run it professionally.

The actual figure varies between **R 40 000 & R 50 000 per month** for the duration of the league, plus the pre-league preparation period (**without including the R 50 000 fee paid by each club to BSA**), and most clubs found it very hard to attract the kind of club sponsorship which would allow them to acquire higher quality foreign players - a crucial element in raising the standard of play throughout the PBL. Few outsiders recognize that it was those club owners who dug deep to contribute from their own funds, who achieved the most success in the league.

In 1998 the PBL received fifteen requests from interested parties wishing to participate in the league. (Some from individuals who had previously expressed the view that the PBL would never get off the ground) But the two biggest obstacles to rapid growth for the PBL, have always been that, sixty percent of the applicants were from Gauteng, and that every two additional teams would require an additional R 2 million of sponsorship funding to cover the increased costs of additional games, travel and accommodation, officials, etc.

Like all responsible commercial enterprises, growth had to be gradual and sustainable, which made a mockery of BSA's amazing announcement that it was going to launch immediately a 14-team "professional" league this year.

#### **WHAT CONTRIBUTIONS WAS TOWARDS DEVELOPMENT?**

The contribution by the PBL and its clubs to development on an annual basis was more than substantial, both by means of financial payments to BSA annually, and also by way of numerous regular community services and clinics in which PBL players and coaches (both local and foreign) participated regionally and nationally.

Few people are aware that the PBL contributed over **R 1,8 million to BSA** out of PBL funds:

- 1994 - R 165 000
- 1995 - R 237 500
- 1996 – R 309 180
- 1997 – R 504 000
- 1998 – R 660 000.

Few people are aware, also, that as a result of sabotaging the PBL, BSA has sacrificed another **R 1,3 million of PBL contributions in 1999** that could have been allocated to development.

Few people are aware that the PBL has never received any accounting of how these PBL funds have been applied by BSA to development, as was originally intended!

#### **OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT – WHY SUCH RESENTMENT?**

In its third year, the PBL Legal Consultant conducted a professional detailed analysis of the internal workings of the PBL office and its staff (its General Manager, Administrative Assistant and Receptionist). The analysis showed that the GM's office was seriously over-extended, and required additional support staff, which was unaffordable at the time.

The GM persuaded the Board of the need to draw on outside professional help in the areas of Strategic Planning and Public Relations. With the input of the PBL Legal Consultant and the Auditors, it became apparent that a Board, composed solely of club directors and BSA representatives, was a potential for conflict of Club and PBL interests, and that a majority of Directors on the Board, should be independent of Club interests.

(It was very gratifying to note that at about the same time, the Australian NBL had independently arrived at the same conclusion, after 15 years of operation, and was modifying the composition of its own Board.)

It was less gratifying to note, however, that most of the internal complaints regarding the GM came from a minority of individuals, because of the strict application of the PBL Rules and Regulations and the Participants Agreement instituted by the GM at all times.

The strict Disciplinary Code as set out in the PBL Rules and Regulations, was based on top International Standards, and was applied completely impartially and equitably by the independent Legal Consultant of the PBL at all times. Any inspection of the PBL records will confirm this, just as much as any review of the minutes of the PBL Board meetings will confirm that only the best principles of business governance, were applied at all times by the PBL.

### **THE HO-TONG SAGA**

Mr. Ho Tong was a Director of the PBL and was given the responsibility for collecting the second sponsorship cheque from the PBL sponsor, Allied Bank, in 1996. He misrepresented to the PBL the amount of the cheque, which he had collected, and after a thorough investigation by Allied & the PBL, the explanation for his actions was totally unacceptable to the PBL Board (of which BSA was a member) or to Allied Bank.

In view of the evidence, the PBL Board and BSA both resolved with Allied Bank's support, that this Director should be dismissed and that the matter be handed over to the Criminal Investigation Fraud Squad, in whose hand the matter is still receiving attention.

### **WHY DID ALLIED BANK CEASE ITS SPONSORSHIP?**

The Allied Bank contacted, during its investigation, a Forensic Audit of the PBL, which confirmed that the PBL Financial controls were effective & correct, & complimented the PBL on having identified immediately the problem caused by Mr. Ho Tong.

The Annual Return on Investments given by PBL to its first sponsor Allied Bank, was in excess of 3 to 1 return, and the sponsors at all times expressed their satisfactions with their involvement with PBL. Unfortunately, Executive Members of BSA were, during the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of this sponsorship, making every effort to convince Allied Bank that the sponsorship money for the league should go to BSA rather than PBL, and this undermined the Sponsors confidence in the sport.

As a matter of fact, in December 1996, Allied confirmed to PBL in writing that their Board had given the green light for the renewal of the PBL sponsorship for a further 3 years, but in February 1997, in a sudden about turn of their overall sports sponsorship policy, Allied Bank withdrew from sponsoring basketball holistically, and the PBL Marketing Agent then signed up Telkom for the sport.

It is sad to note that similar BSA undermining actions succeeded in the suspension by Telkom of its sponsorship for both BSA & PBL.

### **TAX MAN – DID HE CLOSE YOU DOWN?**

In 1998, the Vat Office of the Receiver of Revenue inspected the PBL accounts for the first 5 years of its existence, and ruled that although the PBL Contracts with Allied Bank was split into "sponsorship" and "underwriting" portions and made no mention of VAT, they wanted Vat to be paid on the full amounts from the start of the Contract.

When the Contract was signed in 1994, the amount of the sponsorship was understood by all parties to have been the NETT amounts budgeted by the PBL for delivery of its league, NETT OF VAT. Unfortunately this was not written into the contract, and since the original Allied Bank negotiator and signatory is no longer with Allied, and has refused to get involved, the PBL has been unable to get from Allied the portion of unpaid VAT in year one which was originally supposed to be paid.

During years 2 & 3, Vat was paid both by Allied to PBL & by PBL to the receiver.

The portion of VAT payments not made by the PBL to its Clubs and visa versa in the first year, claimed by the Receiver now, represents an exchange of VAT invoices between PBL & its Clubs, and this has already been dealt with by the PBL & its Clubs to the satisfaction of the Receiver. The Receiver in writing has allowed PBL the extensive repayment terms for the unpaid Allied Bank amounts and any other small balance due by PBL to the receiver.

## **RUMORS ARE THAT YOU HAVE BEEN LIQUIDATED**

Contrary to rumors, The PBL is alive and well and presently waiting for a final resolution of its conflict with BSA in court, within six weeks. The PBL firmly believes that its legal rights on the bases of its existing Legal Contract with BSA to run a Professional League will be fully upheld in the courts.

## **THE CONTROL NEUROSIS!**

How sad that the sport of basketball allows for individuals to choose to set the sport back five years on the misguided view that this is a small price to pay, in order to acquire control of a product that can only succeed if operated, managed and owned on sound business principles.

Totally immersed in its preoccupation with its role as Custodian of the Sport, and its need for total control & regulation of everything to do with basketball, the BSA Executive have lost sight of their most important duty, *“to serve the sport and the people who have elected them to their positions”* and this has rendered them ineffective & has made them the biggest obstacle to growing the sport today.

Ask the question, what service does BSA have to offer its players, coaches, referees, its affiliates, the public, the media or its sponsors! Could this be the reason why 7 sponsors have terminated their agreement with BSA over the last 6-year's?

However, there are creative answers to these problems, but BSA needs creative people capable of applying sound business approach to all of its actions, based on fundamental marketing and business principles with direction. The new committee under the leadership of Mr. Vusi Mgobhozi, is the man that can lead BSA out of the controversial issues that have surrounded the sport for so long. We hope that past history can be swept aside so that the sport can prosper.