



## 2008-09 NCAA Women's Basketball POINTS OF EMPHASIS

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### **Contact on/by the Ball Handler/Dribbler**

Illegal contact by defenders *on* the ball handler/dribbler and illegal contact on the defender *by* the ball handler/dribbler continue to concern the women's basketball rules committee, coaches, players, administrators and other stakeholders in our game. A ball handler/dribbler is any player with player control (holding or dribbling) outside the lane area, either facing or with her back to the basket. Coaches must teach players proper offensive and defensive techniques to be utilized in this situation. Officials must continue to enforce these guidelines to promote consistency. By doing so, players/coaches adhering to the rules will be rewarded and the desired outcome of a more "free-flowing" and "wide-open" game will be achieved.

**Contact *on* the Ball Handler/Dribbler.** For the past several years, defenders have been very restricted in the amount and manner in which they were permitted to "touch" a ball handler/dribbler. The defender is permitted one touch with one hand (front or back) on the ball handler/dribbler in order to "measure up" – this has been called a "hot-stove" touch. This one-time measure-up is the only defensive touch permitted on the ball handler/dribbler. Previous guidelines will again be enforced for the 2008-09 basketball season. A foul shall be called on the defender when:

- a. She contacts the ball-handler/dribbler with an arm-bar (contact with the forearm that is away from the body); more than once with the same hand or alternating hands; with two hands; or with one hand and keeps it on.
- b. She uses the hands/arms to hold or push the ball handler/dribbler.
- c. She uses her body to hold, reroute, impede or displace the ball handler/dribbler.
- d. Any holding, pushing or displacement occurs.

**Contact *by* the Ball Handler/Dribbler.** With the emphasis over the past several years regarding contact *on* the ball handler/dribbler, the offensive player in this match-up, has been permitted to illegally contact her opponent without being whistled for a player-control foul. More emphasis must be placed on the illegal actions of the ball handler/dribbler as she attempts to create distance between herself and her opponent, resulting in an advantage that was not intended by rule. A foul shall be called on the ball handler/dribbler when:

- a. She extends her non-dribbling arm and holds off her opponent or creates space by displacing her defender.
- b. She initiates contact and dribbles (charges) into her legally established defender.
- c. She "backs-down" and displaces her legally established defender.
- d. Any holding, pushing or displacement occurs.

### **Traveling**

In large part due to last year's traveling point of emphasis, tremendous progress was made in penalizing illegal moves and permitting legal ones. Even with these improvements, more accurate and consistent enforcement of the traveling rule can be obtained. Players' skills will improve in this area when officials enforce the rules as written.

Traveling occurs when a player holding the ball moves a foot or both feet, in any direction, in excess of prescribed limits described in Rule 4-68. Uncalled traveling infractions provide a distinct advantage to a ball handler; exponentially so when the no-calls are followed by a score, a defensive

foul or both. Of specific concern are:

- a. The spin move to the basket.
- b. Rebounders repositioning for put-backs.
- c. Perimeter shooters taking an extra “hop” just after they receive the ball or just prior to releasing the try.
- d. Perimeter ball handlers lifting the pivot foot prior to releasing the ball on the dribble.

On a positive note, players have performed, and officials have recognized, legal “step-through” moves, on a more accurate and consistent basis.

### **Sportsmanship – Player Behavior**

Last year’s emphasis on sporting behavior addressed both players and coaches. Coaches were expected to stay within the confines of the coaching box and address officials appropriately. Officials were expected to enforce the stricter bench-decorum guidelines or risk loss of regular- or post-season assignments. The vast majority of coaches and officials met those expectations, and, generally speaking, bench decorum improved. Proper behavior and coaching within the box should be adhered to, even without a specific point of emphasis.

Unfortunately, unsporting behavior among players, and consequently, player technical fouls, increased during the 2007-08 season. This is an alarming and disturbing trend, especially in a game that prides, and markets, itself as having an exemplary sportsmanship environment. Excitement, passion and emotion are desired qualities in our players, but they must be harnessed and displayed positively. Of specific concern are:

- a. Players’ disrespectfully addressing and/or gesturing at an official after a call is made on the court.
- b. Players’ taunting and attempting to intimidate opponents with words and/or gestures during live and dead balls.
- c. Non-incident dead-ball contact with/on an opponent. (NOTE: Contact that occurs after a whistle has blown, that is not incidental and cannot be ignored, by rule, must be penalized with a technical foul.)
- d. Opponents’ “posturing up” or “squaring off” as if to fight – or actually engaging in a fight.

All of these behaviors and situations, in varying degrees and frequency, occurred last season. Players must control their emotions and display appropriate behaviors toward officials, opponents and teammates. Coaches must set proper behavioral expectations of team members and confront those who fail to meet expectations. Officials must heighten their awareness during all game activity – especially during off-ball and dead-ball situations. Officials must also continue to penalize unsporting actions without regard to score, time of game or foul count(s). Failure to do so only exacerbates the situation and intensifies negative emotions.