

New Cage Rules Should Aid Game

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It will probably take a few games for basketball fans to get reacquainted with the game this year, but once they get accustomed to the new rules, I believe they will like what they see.

There have been no drastic changes in the game and the rules that have been changed are going to provide a better ball game.

Probably the most noticeable is the 12-foot foul lane and three-second zone which has been expanded to twice its former width. This may give the smaller man more of a chance (or should we say take away the advantage from the bigger man) and it will also tend to give the defensive team the break on the rebounds since they can loaf under the basket while the offensive men have to stay at least six feet away.

Two other rules affect the foul lane. This year the ball can be thrown into play inside the lane extended out of bounds and on free throws a player may have his arms and body extending over the line; but not his feet while the shot is being taken.

The old bugaboo, the bonus free throw rule, has been changed again and, this time, I believe they are making progress with it.

This year there will be no bonus shots given for the first four fouls of each half. (A player fouled in the act of shooting still gets two shots.) After the first four fouls in each half the old one-and-one rule applies with a bonus shot given if the player makes the first shot.

The big step forward was taken with a rule which forces the team that is behind in the score to force the action. Under this rule a team may stall to protect its lead, but a team which is trailing must attempt to get the ball on defense or must attempt to score on offense.

Now there will be no more of these 10-6 ball games where one team sits on the ball in an attempt to hold down a high scorer.

If the score is tied, both teams must attempt to score and there can be no stalling out the clock for an attempt at a last-second desperation shot.

Several other minor rules have been changed which state that all players eligible to be in the game must be listed with the scorer 10 minutes before game time and the starting five must be announced five minutes in advance. There are no shots on a double foul – just a jump ball at center – but each player is charged with a foul. A ball going over a rectangular board is out of bounds. And on a jump ball, the clock starts and keeps running as soon as tipped.

Mack Schaffer, Ottawa, official rules interpreter for the Ohio State High School Athletic Association and a member of the rules committee, stated that the state coaches association has also voted to recommend that all coaches conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner and remain on the benches.

There is also a ruling that a school will be suspended from the association for one year if a coach removes his team from the court for any reason, whether right or wrong.

There is one new rule, originally scheduled to go into effect this year, which was wisely postponed until next year. This affects the numbers on players' jerseys.

Starting next year, the numbers 6, 7, 8 and 9 will not be used. This is to prevent any misunderstanding among the scorekeepers and also to permit an official to signal a player's number with one hand. Also, number on a uniform must be in contrasting colors. Thus, there can be no white on white, etc.

Schaffer said it has also been recommended that the home team wear light colored uniforms with even numbers and the visiting team wear dark colored uniforms with odd numbers.