

High School Basketball's 3-Pointer

Did it open up the game as was intended?

We like to think of our high school sports as bedrock - never really changing from generation to generation. Your Grandfather's high school basketball game is the same as today's aside from the longer shorts. Revolutionary changes do come around now and then, but are few and far between. One change happened to professional, college and high school basketball in the 1980's. It was the advent of the 3-point shot.

The NBA, NCAA and the high schools of USA introduced the 3-pointer during the 1980's at different distances for the arc. Ohio started using the 3-pointer in 1988.

The high school distance for a 3-pointer is 19'9" from the basket. So why allow a 3-pointer which increases the score by 50% versus making a 2-pointer one inch inside the arc?

The theory was that more room will equal more scoring. With more room to drive, to pass to operate in the key without another defender crowding you, it should be easier to score.

The inside players should find it easier to operate with the help defenders further away and the outside players

should have more room to drive for the same reason.

This is what the "Powers to Be" hoped would happen but three variables counter balanced these benefits - rough play, jump shots and lack of fouls.

Two of these variables go hand in hand. The arc did stretch the defense and allowed more room, but the game of basketball gradually became much more physical with fewer fouls called. Players can no longer drive to the basket without being aggressively and physically defended. Watching post players trying to get position is like watching a wrestling match.

Few players can shoot a 15-foot jump shot. Guards either shoot a three or drive to the basket, shoot a runner and hope the officials call a foul. Post players 10-feet from the basket try to get even closer.

Since the game has become so physical, players do not shoot from the field as well. Since fewer fouls are called, fewer points from the line are scored. Players and coaches today seem to feel that it is better to shoot a 3-pointer versus a contested 2-pointer.