

Major Rule Changes

There have been many major rule changes that have been made over the years in order to “improve” the game of basketball. Listed below are some that have had a great influence on how the game is played today. Not all the dates are perfectly accurate – some are only close to the stated first year.

TEN-SECOND RULE – In 1933, the 10-second rule was put in place. This forced teams to cross the center line in less than 10 seconds. Before this, teams were able to use the entire floor to stall or “spread the floor”.

THREE-SECOND RULE – In 1936, the 3-second rule was put in place. This forced a player, with or without the ball, to vacate the foul lane. Before this, the bigger players would simply stand next to the basket for as long as they wished.

CENTER JUMP – In 1938, the center jump following each basket was eliminated. Now each team would get possession of the ball after the other team scored a basket - free throw or field goal. A jump ball would still be administered after a held ball.

FOUL LANE WIDENED – In 1958, the foul lane was widened from six feet to twelve. This rule moved the big men even further from the basket and prevented them from “camping” so close to the goal.

THREE REFEREES – In 1968, due to an injury, three referees worked the Ottawa-Glandorf/Coldwater game. It wasn’t until the 2002 season that the Putnam County League started using three officials for all league games. Shortly after, three were used for all games.

SMALLER BALL – In 1986, the girls and 7/8 boys started using a smaller ball than the high school boys.

JUMP BALLS – In 1987, the jump ball was eliminated except for the start of the game and overtimes. After the opening jump, possession for all held balls is determined by the alternate arrow.

THREE-POINT LINE – In 1988, a field goal made outside the three-point arc is worth three points. This is 19’9” from the basket.

FOUL SHOTS – There have been MANY different ways to determine when and how many foul shots will be taken throughout the game. Shooting two free throws when fouled in the act of shooting has been the norm. However, common fouls have been handled differently. In today’s game for a half, foul shots are one-plus-one for fouls 7-9. When ten or more fouls have been committed, two free throws are awarded.

GYMNASIUMS – In the late 1970’s, schools with the small gyms were moving the games to larger gyms to accommodate the crowds and to play on bigger floors. All courts today are at least 50 x 84 in contrast to the much smaller floors that were 8-10 feet narrower and 15-20 feet shorter.

POSSIBLE FUTURE CHANGES – The shot clock which has been used for many years in professional and college basketball would be a major change. It is currently being experimented with in several states.

Another possible rule addition could be the half-circle area under the basket in which a defensive player must be outside of in order to “take a charge”.