

Rules “Experts” At It Again

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Basketball’s rules “experts” have just completed another session of gumming up the game. The National Basketball Committee of the United States and Canada, meeting at Seattle, Wash., last week passed a bunch of rules pertaining to personal fouls which will do nothing but “foul up” the game.

Briefly, here is what they did: Made it mandatory to shoot all free throws instead of giving the choice of taking the ball out of bounds; Awarded a second free throw when the first is missed, up to the final three minutes; Awarded two shots to any player fouled in the last three minutes, considering any foul in that time intentional.

IN ADDITION, they are considering limiting the time a team can keep possession of the ball in the front court, and one of the “experts” even went so far as to propose doing away with a time limit on games and playing to a fixed number of points instead.

The idea of all this is to speed up the game and eliminate fouling and late game stalling. Now the question is, “Why?” What’s wrong with a slow and deliberate game? And what’s wrong with stalling?

THEY’RE MAKING it so that team work doesn’t mean much any more and the hot shot who can shoot from anywhere on the floor is the whole team. The team with set plays and a good defense will pass out of existence with a few more rules of this type.

Certainly, stalling makes it hard on the trailing team, but everything one team does is supposed to be to the disadvantage of the opposition. If a team is ahead it should be allowed to protect its lead, but under the anti-stalling rules this will be impossible.

If the team in the lead in the last few minutes should get fouled it would be to their advantage, but the new rules, if they have the ball and are fouled then have to shoot the free throws and probably lose the ball.

IN A WAY, the rules committee is defeating its own purpose in trying to eliminate stalling. By awarding two shots for all fouls in the last three minutes they are inviting stalling because a player, knowing he would get two shots, would hang on to the ball hoping to get fouled, and the other team will more readily foul knowing the first teams has to take the shot giving the defensive side a chance to get possession of the ball. The defensive side will be willing to take the chance that the fouled player will miss at least one of the shots and they will get a

chance to trade a basket for a free throw, instead of letting the time run out with them behind.

These new rules (and more so the proposed rules) will do nothing more than eliminate a slow and deliberate game and turn it into even more of a race-horse affair than it has already become. It is my guess that some of these will be just as short-lived as the official’s time out rule of a few years ago.

Fixed Total Rule Just Plain Silly

The “fixed total” rule where a game is over when a certain number of points are attained instead of after a definite length of time, which was proposed to the National Basketball committee last week, is one of the silliest ideas to come up yet.

In the first place, who ever heard of a game such as basketball, which takes the combined efforts of a whole team working together, played in such a manner. Football, baseball, bowling, hockey and practically all other leading sports are played with definite termination points at which time the teams with the most points, regardless of how many or how few, wins.

The big question is what total score would be used. By the very nature of the game, a high total would take some teams a couple of hours to attain and a low score would end some games in only a matter of minutes.

SOME TEAMS stress offense and others defense, but still it is hard to find a team that scored close to the same total during any one season. Two teams may run up fairly high totals when playing each other but against other teams they might be held to low scores and yet still win the ball games.

Good examples of that can found right here in Putnam county. Columbus Grove, county league co-champs, scored an average of 55.1 points per game during the past season, but in doing so they racked up scores from 26 to 86 points, and they won both games in which they scored these totals.

The rule makers are getting away from the whole idea of the game. If they want to see who can score the most points the quickest they could set a total of about 100 points and then give each team a basket and a ball and say “Go to it.” The game would probably last only about 10 minutes but it would be fast and high scoring, and there would be no fouling or stalling.