

# Time To Change The Rules

## Dickering

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Last week Adolph Rupp, the great coach of the nation's fifth ranking college basketball team, Kentucky, suggested that the NCAA rules committee do away with the present bonus free throw shot.

It is likely that his idea will be taken, if not next years, at least in the not too distant future. Professional teams have done away with it and the Big Ten conference has followed suit, to the gratification of many fans.

It would be a good idea for high schools, too! For years, ever since the limit in personal fouls was raised from four to five per player per game, rules committees have been attempting to find a way to cut down the amount of fouling, but have had no success whatever.

Instead of cutting down on the number of fouls, the rules, as they now stand, make the free throw about the most important part of the game.

SEVERAL YEARS ago the bonus free throw rule was adopted, whereby a player was given an extra shot if he missed his first attempt. Coaches saw this was no good so they did a quick about face and now a player is awarded a second shot if he make his first one.

With the original bonus rule, foul shooting ability was not important, because, if he missed, a player got another chance. Now a good foul shooter can be the most important member of a team. If a player is good shot, he can score two points when he's fouled and it is not unusual to find a player scoring 10 or 15 free throws per game.

Just how important this penalty shot has become can be seen from how many games are won at the foul line. Right here in Putnam County, high school teams have played 115 games this year. Twenty-seven, or almost one out of every four were won on fouls when the losing team made just as many or more field goals than the winning team. In nine of those 26, the teams were equal in field goals but in 18, or about one of every six, the losing team out goaled the winners.

LAST FRIDAY night, in a full round of league play, five of the six games were decided by free throws. Ottoville knocked Miller City out of first place by eight points, the difference being free throws. Glandorf dumped Vaughnsville into the cellar by eight points, also with eight more free throws. Kalida ruined Ottawa Sts. Peter and Paul' hopes for share of a league title with free throws. SPPS got one more goal than the Wildcats did. Ottawa Public had two more goals than Continental but was defeated by two points. Fort Jennings beat Pandora-Gilboa by 11 points to move into first place. Both teams got the same number of field goals. The next night Glandorf beat Deshler, although the losers had two more field goals.

Other examples of how free throws meant a big difference this season were the Leipsic-Deshler game, won by Leipsic by five points, although Deshler sank five more goals; Vaughnsville's one point victory over Oakwood, although Oakwood got five

more goals; and Leipsic's four-point victory over Vaughnsville, although the winners were out-goaled by three.

IN ADDITION to these 27 won from the free-throw line, there were a great many where fouls made quite a difference in the point spread and that spread during the game probably had a psychological effect on the players.

In many games the difference in goals was only one or two, but the final point spreads was as much as 10 points.

Rupps's idea, and that of the professionals and the Big Ten, is to give a bonus free throw only after a team commits a certain number of fouls per half.

This could be carried down to the high school level just as well. Where the colleges allow a bonus free throw after six fouls per half, high schools could allow the bonus throw after three or four per quarter.

In that way, the players would attempt to keep under the limited number and the parade between the lines would be eliminated to a great extent. Now, every foul is of equal importance and players make no great effort to avoid them.

Another idea that has been tossed around quite a bit in recent years, but seems to be falling on deaf ears among the rules makers, is the "no harm, no foul," policy on calls away from the foul circle.

Many referees seem to follow that rule to some degree while others seem whistle-happy and sound off at every little thing. This kind of inconsistency cannot be done away with until there is a definite definition in the rule book on just what is a foul.

An example of this inconsistency can be seen in the two games played between Ottawa Sts. Pete and Paul and Lima St. Gerard this year. On December 16<sup>th</sup> the two met in Ottawa and there were 55 personal fouls called in the game. St. Gerard got one more field goal but won by 16 points.

They met again at Lima Sunday and only 22 fouls were called. St. Gerard won by 10 points on the strength of five more field goals, as the teams made an equal number of free throws.

Along the same line Rupp advocates that an offensive foul be penalized only by the loss of the ball. The whole idea of these rules would be to get the game back to a contest of basketball instead of a foul-shooting exhibition. Mr. Rupp, I second the motion!