

Goaltending and Basket Interference Addressed in 2025-2026 Basketball Rules Changes

Putnam County Sentinel – Charlie Warnimont, Sports Editor

A trio of changes to address when goaltending and basket interference are called are among the changes to high school basketball rules for the 2025-2026 season.

These revisions to the NFHS Basket Rules Book are among the six changes recommended by the Basketball Rules Committee during its April 28-30 meeting in Indianapolis - all of which were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

Rule 4-22-3 has been added to indicate that a ball is considered to be on its downward flight once it contacts the backboard on a legitimate shot attempt. Therefore, it is goaltending if a defensive player touches the ball after it contacts the backboard. Prior to this change, an official determined if a shot attempt was still ascending and out of the cylinder before goaltending could be called.

Rule 4-22-1 and 4-22-2 were amended to indicate that only a defensive player can commit goaltending, eliminating the possibility of an offensive goaltending violation. The change removes the need to determine whether a ball in flight is a field goal attempt or a pass. Any alteration of a shot attempt with contact to the basket or backboard by an offensive player would be considered basket interference.

Additionally, the act of intentionally slapping or striking the backboard during a shot attempt will now result in basket interference and not a technical foul.

Similarly, it is a violation for a player to purposely or deceitfully delay a return to the court after being out of bounds and be the first to touch the ball in new language added in Rules 9-2-12 and 9-3-4. This change removes the act from Rule 10-4-2, which called for a technical foul and lessens the penalty to a violation.

In a change to Rule 4-34-1, all players in the game will be considered bench personnel once an official signals for a time-out. This change ensures consistent enforcement of penalties for unsporting conduct by allowing officials to issue technical fouls to bench personnel during time-outs.

The determination of the location for a throw-in after a stoppage of play was adjusted in Rule 7-5-4 using the three-point line. If a violation occurs on or within the three-point line, the designated spot will be on the end line. A throw in will be on the sideline if the violation occurs outside the three-point line.