

# Craig's Call

January 23, 2026

Dear officials,

The regular season is quickly wrapping up. Some teams are on a roll, some are mailing it in, and many are hungry for a win. Everyone (players, coaches, officials, game management, and our families) is tired. It is just as important now as in prior games that we keep our focus in our PCA for 32+ minutes every night. The minute that we start to coast is when the unexpected happens. If we are focused and prepared for that moment, we deal with it correctly. If not, who knows what might happen next.

## **Off Ball Contact:**

Dead ball time is often dangerous. Here are 2 live ball plays that we must also be ready for. While the same student athlete is involved in both plays, this presentation is not to be used to target a given athlete nor prejudice our future actions. Our focus should be on our vision and coverage in every game every night.

### Play 1

This play can happen to anyone in the blink of an eye. In this play the C or T must account for the players in transition. When the crew briefly spectates and watches the ball, we miss the play. This is at minimum an intentional foul and possibly a flagrant personal foul. Incidental contact is NOT the ruling here.

### Play 2

This action has no place in basketball at any level. This play is in T(old L)'s PCA. Unfortunately, T is now looking up court and the injured player had his back to the official. I suspect that the C (who probably had the best angle) had started in transition and left the players for T to handle. This is a flagrant personal foul that most likely would be upgraded to a Supplemental Disqualification.

## **We must compliment the player in white for not retaliating.**

Like the play in the high post that we viewed 2 weeks ago, an official can be in position with an appropriate angle and still miss the call. Continue to work hard on every play and focus on your PCA.

## Disqualification / Player replacement:

**15** seconds is all a head coach gets to substitute a player.

1. Report the foul to the table.
2. After being notified that it is the players 5<sup>th</sup> foul, slowly step toward the head coach and inform them that player A1 has fouled out and that a substitution is needed.

In potentially heated/ combative situation between the calling official and the head coach, a partner should switch positions.

I like this technique because the switch allows a few extra seconds for everyone to “deescalate.” Fancy.

3. Slowly turn to the timer and instruct them to blow a horn, set the clock for **“15 seconds”**
4. A substitute must ready prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> horn. If not, the head coach is assessed a direct technical foul and loses the privilege to use the coaching box.
5. Inform the player of their disqualification.
6. Bring in the substitute and resume play with a whistle.

Remember only **15 seconds** for player replacement.

## Blood is Different:

Teams now have **20 seconds** to try to remove blood from a jersey.

If not, then a sub or a time-out is needed.



## Alternating Possession Arrow:

There has been some confusion about when to and when not to switch the Alternating Possession Arrow. Here is a quick review.

### **When to Switch**

1. After the throw-in is **legally touched.**
2. After a throw-in **violation by the offense.**
  - a. Leaving the designated spot,
  - b. >5 seconds to release the ball,
  - c. throwing the ball directly into the basket,
  - d. lodging the ball between ring and backboard,
  - e. throwing the ball directly out of bounds,
  - f. being the first to touch the ball

### **DO NOT Switch**

1. The **defense violates** by
  - a. Kicking the throw-in
  - b. Fisting or punching the throw-in
2. **ANY foul** by either team



**TOUGH PLAY!**  
Do you know this ruling?

B1 reaches over the vertical plane before the ball is released for an AP throw-in. The official blows the whistle.

**Ruling:** Team B is given a delay of game warning. Play resumes with team A making the original AP throw-in.

- **WHY?** A warning is not a defensive violation; it is a warning! Therefore, when Team A1 legally completes the AP throw-in, we switch the arrow.

## Coaching Box:

Before each game we ask coaches to

- “certify to the contest official(s) that your contestants are legally equipped and uniformed according to NFHS rules and PIAA adoptions. “

These adoptions include approved medical devices, the mercy rule and the use of the coaching box. In a few years, they will include the use of a shot clock. Oh, a boy can dream!

No official wants to bother with the coaching box. We have 10 players running, cutting, screening, jumping, tripping, holding, and smacking each other. The last thing we want to do is notice if a grown adult can stay below their line. BUT, we must. If we allow coaches to roam, what other rule will you set aside that night? Not to mention that when one coach coaches from their box and the other does not, the playing field is not level.



A point of emphasis this year was also keeping coaches off of the court. How's that going? My video review indicates: inconsistent enforcement. Let's try to do better. We have guidelines to follow, and we use a progressive discipline approach depending on the coach's actions. We are expected to referee using chart A. If we at least follow chart B we will get closer to what is expected in Chart A.

**CHART A - Approved - Ideal**

Offense #	Out of box coaching	Out of box complaining
1	Warning in book	Direct Technical Foul - lose box
2	Direct Technical Foul - lose box	Direct Technical Foul -Ejection
3	Direct Technical Foul -Ejection	Are you kidding?

**CHART B - Unapproved - More realistic**

Offense #	Out of box coaching	Out of box complaining	Out of box Yelling
1	Walk them back	Warning in book	Direct Technical Foul- lose box
2	Warning in book	Direct Technical Foul - lose box	Direct Technical Foul -Ejection
3	Direct Technical Foul	Direct Technical Foul -Ejection	Are you kidding?

It's late. I know that the above chart is unofficial, bootleg if you will. We have to continue to work with coaches so that our athlete can shine.

Coaches are looking for:

consistency

communication and

correct calls.

So whether it's coaching box enforcement, off ball flagrant conduct, substitutions, or alternating possessions, continue to work hark and give your best every night. Continue to be the best TEAM on the court.

Enjoy this spirited clip [Play 3](#)

Craig