

2024-25 Points of Emphasis

Warning For Delay

Delaying a game and allowing it to develop into an actionless contest is not beneficial to anyone involved in interscholastic competition. One of the officials' roles is to ensure the game maintains an appropriate pace of play, including throughout the administration of penalties, throw-ins, free throws, etc. The NFHS rules allow for officials to give an initial warning to teams that violate Rule 4-47, which defines a warning for delay as an administrative procedure by an official that is recorded in the scorebook by the scorer and reported to the head coach. Warnings may be issued for the following:

- Throw-in plane violations;
- Huddle by either team or contact with the free thrower that delays the administration of the free throw;
- Interfering with the ball following a goal;
- Failure to have the court ready, following a time-out; or
- New in 2024-25, failure to immediately pass the ball to the nearer official.

Any two delay warnings will result in a team technical foul. The warnings do not have to be issued for the same reason or to the same player or team member to escalate to a team technical foul.

Officials must utilize the Warning for Delay as soon as the behavior occurs. Initiating the warning allows the behavior to be addressed early. Failing to address behavior that violates this rule before initiating a warning may create confusion among coaches and players, creating an environment that becomes more difficult to manage.

Faking Being Fouled

“Faking Being Fouled” was added to the NFHS Basketball Rules Book twenty years ago as an unsporting foul committed by a player, resulting in a player technical. In 2004-2005, the Rules Committee addressed “Specific Unsporting Acts” as a Point of Emphasis, and “Flopping” was one of the points. Twenty years later, faking being fouled continues to be a point of concern for the rules committee. This year, the rules committee added a warning (4-49) and defined faking being fouled as:

- Overtly embellishing the impact of incidental contact on block/charge plays or attempted tries for goal;
- Using a “head bob” to simulate illegal contact; or
- Using any other tactics to create an opinion of being fouled and therefore gaining an advantage.

A warning will now be issued for the first instance, lessening the severity of the penalty while continuing to address the behavior. A technical foul will be assessed to the team for each subsequent occurrence. Officials will utilize the new signal No. 15 at the time the flop occurs. Providing officials with an opportunity to warn a player before issuing a technical foul will allow players to adjust their behaviors before receiving a harsher penalty.

Proper Procedures for Handling Blood

There is an inherent risk to participating in interscholastic athletics. While rules committees prioritize player safety within the rules writing process, injuries still occur. Previously, when an injury occurred that involved blood on a player and/or a uniform, play was stopped immediately, and the player was directed to leave the game until the bleeding was stopped, the wound was covered, the uniform and/or body was appropriately cleaned, and/or the uniform was changed before returning (3-3-7). Often, the situation can be resolved quickly by covering the wound with a bandage and/or properly cleaning a uniform and/or player’s skin.

A new rule provides a team with 20 seconds to address a player(s) who is bleeding or has blood on the uniform without being charged a time-out. Officials should allow the player(s) to report to the sideline near the team bench before signaling the timer to begin the 20-second timer. If resolved within the 20-second time limit, the player will be permitted to remain in the game. If the issue is not resolved within 20 seconds, a coach may request a time-out to allow the player to remain in the game, if the situation can be corrected by the end of the time-out.

Coaches and bench personnel (i.e. athletic trainers) should review the General Guidelines for Sports Hygiene, Skin Infections and Communicable Diseases found in the appendices before administering first aid.