

Oregon Youth Basketball League Referee Mechanics Information & Guidebook



LEAGUE RULES

You have to know the rules for the league ([click here to go to OYBL Rules & Regulations Page](#))

The Oregon Youth Basketball League uses the Coaches as referees for our games. In most cases this league is the only officiating experience you have. Being a basketball official is a lot more than calling a few out of bounds calls. It can be a lot of work! But, knowing where to stand and what to do will help make the job a lot easier.

We use "2-man mechanics" meaning we have only 2 officials on the court. The two positions are called:

Lead Official ahead of the play or positioned on the end line.

Trail Official just behind the players moving up court, or located above the free throw line extended (usually).

If you picture a rectangle drawn around all 10 players, the two officials would generally be located at opposite corners of the rectangle.

One more definition: "Transition" is the time when the play is moving from one end of the court to the other.

With these definitions understood we are ready for specific information on what to do and how to do it as listed below.

- Beginning the game: Jump Ball! (also over time periods) and each quarter
- Positioning of the Lead in transition and normal play
- Positioning of the Trail in transition and normal play
- Inbounding the ball
- Free throws (*revised*)
- Violations (walk, out of bounds, double dribble, back court, 3 seconds in the key, elbows, 5 second closely guarded)

- Fouls (hold, push, block, hand check, player controlled)

JUMP BALL

In reality one of the officials is called the Referee and the other is called the Umpire. While they have a number of different duties in a regular high school game, in our league the only differences relate to the beginning of each quarter. Here is what each do.

- **Referee -- Beginning the game and each overtime period**
 1. Take the ball and go to the division line away from the benches (near the parents).
 2. Make eye-contact with your partner and make sure s/he is ready to go.
 3. Make sure you have 5 players from each team and they are lined up correctly.
 4. Blow your whistle loud and long (a full second). This lets everyone know play is beginning.
 5. Walk to the middle while announcing which way each color is going.
 6. Toss the ball.
 7. Wait for players to clear you.
 8. Become the Trail official.
- **Referee -- Beginning quarters 2, 3, and 4**
 1. Take the ball and go to the division line away from the benches (near the parents).
 2. Make eye-contact with your partner and make sure s/he is ready to go.
 3. Make sure you have 5 players from each team and the correct team is ready to inbound the ball.
 4. Blow your whistle loud and long (a full second) and raise your hand to "hold the clock". This lets everyone know play is beginning.
 5. Bounce the ball to the inbounding player.
 6. Start your 5-second count for the inbound.
 7. Chop time when the ball is touched on the court.
 8. Become the Trail official.
- **Umpire -- Beginning the game and each overtime period**
 1. Go to the division line between the two benches.
 2. Verify the table is watching and ready to start.
 3. Nod to the Referee that you are ready to go.
 4. As the Referee reaches the middle to toss, raise your hand to "hold the clock".
 5. Chop time when the ball is touched by a player.
 6. Seeing which team gets control of the ball, race to the proper end line to become the Lead.
- **Umpire -- Beginning quarters 2, 3, and 4**
 1. Go to the proper end line to be the first Lead.
 2. Officiate the players closest to you until the Referee is in the Trail position.

THE LEAD

The Lead gets its name because it "leads" the teams down the court during transition. The responsibilities can be divided into 4 different events (other than special times covered on their own pages, like the Jump Ball and Free Throws).

- **Transition**
 - Race to the end line to assume the Lead position, watching over your shoulder as you go.
 - You should be in position before any players get down to the Free Throw Line extended in the front court.
- **Normal Play**
 - Stay off the court, up against the wall or out of bounds. Do NOT wander onto the court.
 - Keep your outside shoulder outside of the players.
 - Your coverage area is the key (paint) and below the Free Throw Line extended on your side.
 - Do NOT watch the ball. Watch hands and knees of the defensive players in your coverage area -- especially when the ball is not in your area.
- **On a Shot**
 - Do NOT wander toward the key -- stay wide! And do NOT watch the ball to see if it goes in. (The players' reactions will tell you this.)
 - If the shooter was in your area, watch the shooter until they regain their balance and are "safe". Then watch the rebounders (NOT the shot).
 - If the shot was from beyond the 3-point arc in your area, hold 1 arm up at 45 degrees showing 3 fingers until the shot is good or misses.
 - Your primary spot to watch during rebounding is the Block on your side. Watch the players for pushing fouls on rebounding, etc.
 - If the Trail signals a 3-point shot is good, it is best to mirror the 3-point signal (both arms straight up).

THE TRAIL

The Trail gets its name because it "trails" the teams down the court during transition. The responsibilities can be divided into 3 different events (other than special times covered on their own pages, like the Jump Ball and Free Throws).

- **Transition**
 - This job is simple to explain. Position yourself just behind the last player coming down the court. Stay near your sideline unless you need to move closer to a tightly defended ball.
 - When you reach the front court, the transition is over - go to Normal Play.
- **Normal Play**
 - Keep your top shoulder above the players, but otherwise be as far down the court as possible.
 - Your coverage area when the ball is in your area is above the key (paint) and below the Free Throw Line extended on your side.
 - If the ball goes below the Free Throw Line extended on your partner's side, you must also cover the key (paint). While doing this, drop down below the 3-point arc and stay close to the side line. (If the ball comes back up, move back up where you were.)
 - Do NOT watch the ball. Watch hands and knees of the defensive players in your coverage area. Be especially aware of bad screens.

- **On a Shot**

- If the shooter was in your area, watch the shooter until they regain their balance and are "safe". Do NOT watch the shot.
- If the shot is from beyond the 3-point arc, raise 1 arm at 45 degrees showing 3 fingers until the shot is good or misses.
- While the ball is in the air, move near the sideline and down to the Free Throw Line extended. (If you run real slow, move only down to the top of the 3-point arc.)
- Be aware if the ball hits the goal supports, passes over the backboard, etc.
- Watch the rebounders. Your primary point of coverage is the Block on your side of the key.
- If the shot was a 3-point try and is good, raise both arms straight up for a couple of seconds to ensure the table sees you.

INBOUNDING

This is probably the easiest page. The mechanic is different for the Lead and Trail. Here is what each do.

- **Lead -- End Line of the Front Court ONLY!**

1. Notice that the lead should normally only inbound the ball to the offense on the end line of their front court.
2. Always stand outside of the player. That means they are between you and the key.
3. If this is after a time out, then blow your whistle first, just like starting a quarter.
4. Hand them the ball; do NOT bounce it to them.
5. As you hand the ball, your other hand goes up to "hold the clock".
6. Begin your 5-second count. (It ends when they release the ball directly onto the court.)
7. When the ball is touched on the court, chop time.
8. Officiate.

- **Trail -- Back Court or Side Lines**

1. Think about the rectangle and position yourself toward the spot you will need to be in. You should be about 10 feet from the player.
2. Bounce the ball to the player. (You cannot hand it to them if you're 10 feet away!)
3. As you bounce the ball, your other hand goes up to "hold the clock".
4. Begin your 5-second count. (It ends when they release the ball directly onto the court.)
5. When the ball is touched on the court, chop time.
6. Officiate.

Special Note for Trail when Lead is Inbounding

When the Lead is inbounding the ball on the end line, typically most teams have 1 or 2 set plays they run. You should position yourself near your sideline and about the middle of the players. For example, if the offense runs the "stack" play (where the 4 on-court players stack in front of each other, often on the side of the key) then you position yourself even with the 3rd offensive player. That will put you in a good position to see any holding fouls as the players "break" and spread out. You should (almost) always be below the Free Throw Line extended.

FREE THROWS

The mechanic is different for the Lead and Trail. Here is what each do after you make sure the players are lined up in the correct positions.

- **Lead -- Administering the Free Throw**
 1. Step into the paint and announce the number of shots.
 2. Bounce the ball to the shooter.
 3. If there will definitely be an additional shot, step over next to the player nearest the end line on the bench side. Do NOT stand where the shooter is looking at you.
 4. If this could be the last shot, move off the end line near the bleachers on the same side as the benches. You're moving to the normal Lead position.
 5. You watch the lower player (nearest the end line) on your side and the entire opposite side for line violations.
 6. After the shot, if there is to be an additional shot, have the players give you the ball and repeat the process.
 7. If the last shot is good, then raise your hand to "hold the clock" and follow the normal Inbounding procedure.
 8. If the last shot is missed, you are watching the rebounding. Remember your primary place to watch is the Block on your side.
- **Trail**
 1. Position yourself away from the benches, near the side line, and below the top of the 3-point arc.
 2. As the Lead announces the number of shots, hold that number of fingers straight out to your side (for only a second or so).
 3. Be aware of a requested time out from the bench; that is why you are across from them.
 4. You watch the top 3 positions on the opposite side of the lane (players facing you), the shooter, and all players behind the 3-point arc for line violations.
 5. You are also responsible to see if the ball (shot) contacts the rim. If it does not, you call a violation ("no rim") on the shooter.
 6. As the last shot is released, step down to the Free Throw Line extended and raise one hand to "hold the clock". (You step down to improve your view of rebounding. Remember your primary place to watch is now the Block on your side of the key.)
 7. When the ball is touched on the court, chop time.
 8. If the last shot is made, just drop your hand -- the Lead will "hold the clock" and chop time. You will become the new Lead upon the inbound....
 9. Officiate.

VIOLATIONS

Violations include many items: walk, double dribble, out of bounds, 3, 4 or 5 seconds (in the lane), fist, kick, 5 seconds (closely guarded or inbound delay), 10 seconds (backcourt), over-and-back.... For most violations the penalty is the other team will inbound the ball at the spot nearest to the violation, not where the ball is.

In most cases the violation is on the offense and that means the ball will go to the other team. If called by the Trail, it generally means that the calling official will not administer the inbound. Here is an example, and why.

Assume you are the Trail, and the offense commits a traveling violation ("walk") right in front of you in the front court. The other team will get the ball, and be going toward the far end.

If the play was a steal by the defense, you would be the new Lead and beat the players down the court. Your partner, in the Lead position, would become the new Trail and trail the play down the court.

There is no difference for the officials when the play is a violation. You still want to be on opposite corners of the rectangle containing the players. Think about the two possibilities:

1. You hold the ball and wait for your partner to run the full length of the court.
2. You run half the length of the court to the other end, while your partner runs half the length of the court to where you are.

Which of these choices will get the ball back in play the quickest? Which takes longer, to run the full court or half the court?

The correct mechanic is #2. Remember though to cross the court diagonally as you go if the ball should inbound on your side, because your partner will be coming to that spot for the inbound. Off course all violations are not called by the Trail in the front court. As the Lead you might call a lane violation, and the ball will then inbound by the defense just outside the paint. You will administer this inbound by bouncing the ball to the player, and you become the new Trail.

So what are the keys:

1. Loud whistle and raised open hand to stop the clock. (Never mind that it might keep running in this league, do the mechanic correctly.)
2. Loudly communicate the violation, and use the hand signal if you know it.
3. Loudly communicate to all which team will inbound the ball and where.
4. Think about the next play and where the officials should be. Then move to minimize the time for your crew to be ready.

At the top we said that most violations result in the other team getting the ball, and most of these are offensive violations. There are two other types of violations:

- Free throw violation: results in either canceling the shot if committed by the offense, or awarding another shot if committed by the defense and the shot was missed. (If both are guilty the shot is cancelled and, unless there is another shot to be taken, the A/P arrow is used for the inbound.)
- Shot violations: basket interference and goaltending -- both cancel the shot if committed by the offense, and result in awarded points if committed by the defense. (We don't see much of this in the SRBC league.)

FOULS

A Foul is defined as...

... any illegal contact that gives the offender an advantage or places the offended at a disadvantage.

This means that some contact is not a foul but should be ruled as "incidental contact." However, almost all new officials do not call enough fouls. During your first 100-150 games, the best policy is when in doubt, call the foul.

There are two important keys to "seeing" the fouls that occur:

- Never watch the ball -- always watch the DEFENSE in your area.
- Don't get too close to the play -- stay back enough to see the whole picture. (And stand still -- don't be a moving camera.)

The mechanics are really easy:

- Blow your whistle very loud and long, and raise a fist straight up over your head.
- Spit the whistle out. (Don't hold it. That's why you have a lanyard.)
- Communicate what the foul is so the offending player knows what the call is.
- Tell your partner (and everyone else) what will happen next:
 - "Green 4 is shooting 2 shots."
 - "Red inbound on the side (pointing to the spot)."
- Move to a place between 15 feet and half the court from the table.
- Report to the table if the basket counts if appropriate, then in order the color, number, foul, and what happens next.
- Move to your new position to resume play.

A key point is that the officials exchange ends after every foul. Since no two officials call everything the same, this keeps it fair for both teams. This means as the calling official you might go right back where you were to administer an inbound, or you may have to jog to the far end of the court.