

Free Throw Procedures and Foul Administration Amended in 2023-24 High School Basketball Rules Changes

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Beginning next year, high school basketball teams will shoot two free throws for common fouls when in the “bonus.” This change to Rule 4-8-1 eliminates the one-and-one scenario and sets new foul limits each quarter for awarding the bonus free throw.

Rules changes were approved by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Basketball Rules Committee at its annual meeting April 24-26 in Indianapolis. The recommendations were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

In addition to awarding two foul shots for all common fouls, teams will reach the bonus when their opponent commits five fouls in each quarter and team fouls will reset at the end of each quarter. Previously, teams were awarded the one-and-one bonus when their opponents committed seven fouls in a half and two foul shots when 10 fouls were committed each half.

“The rules committee studied data that showed higher injury rates on rebounding situations and saw this as an opportunity to reduce opportunities for rough play during rebounds,” said Lindsey Atkinson, NFHS Director of Sports and liaison to the Basketball Rules Committee. “Additionally, resetting the fouls each quarter will improve game flow and allow teams to adjust their play by not carrying foul totals to quarters two and four.”

The throw-in procedure for front-court violations was simplified in Rules 7-5-2 through 7-5-5. When the ball is in team control in the offensive team’s frontcourt and the defensive team commits a violation, a common foul prior to the bonus, or the ball becomes dead, the corresponding throw-in by the offensive team will be at one of four designated spots determined by where the infraction took place. The designated spots are either the nearest 28-foot mark along each sideline or the nearest spot 3 feet outside the lane line on the end line. The one exception is when the defensive team causes a ball to be out of bounds, the throw-in shall be the spot where the ball went out of bounds.

Throw-in administration was also addressed in a change to Rule 7-6-6. When an official administers a throw-in to the wrong team, the error can be fixed before the first dead ball after the ball becomes live unless there has been a change in possession.

Other approved rules changes include:

- Rule 2-1-3 establishes the official placement of a shot clock operator at the scorer’s table for those states utilizing the shot clock.
- Rule 3-4-5 clarifies that multiple styles of uniform bottoms may be worn by teammates, but they must all be like-colored and adhere to uniform rules outlined in Rule 3-6-2 regarding logos and trademarks.
- Rule 3-5-6 addresses undershirts and allows teams to wear a single solid color or solid black for visiting teams with dark jerseys. This provides an opportunity for schools with hard-to-find colors to have all players wear a black undershirt.
- Rule 9-3-3 was amended to allow a player to step out of bounds and return to the court if the player gains no advantage. A player is penalized only if, after returning inbounds, the player is the first to touch the ball or avoids a violation.

A complete listing of the basketball rules changes will be available on the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org. Click on "Activities & Sports" at the top of the home page and select "Basketball."

According to the 2021-22 NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, basketball is the third-most popular high school sport for boys with 521,616 participants in 18,428 schools nationwide. It is the fourth-most popular girls sport with 370,466 participants in 17,901 schools.