

# THE REBOUNDERS REPORT



The Ohio High School Athletic Association

The NFHS Rules Process

Updated August 15, 2016

## Where did THAT Crazy Rule Come From?

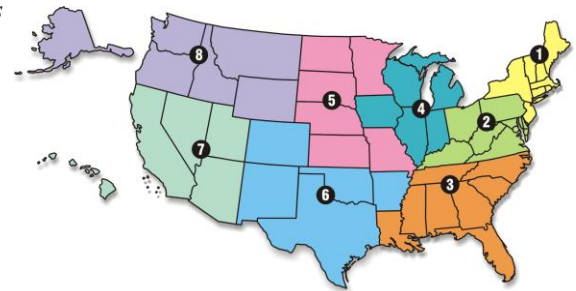
The “shot clock” argument; “why don’t we have it”? To understand why we do not, it is necessary to understand the ‘process’ by which basketball rules are made.. Most ‘casual’ fans do not realize that rules are made by ONE organization – The National Federation of High School Associations (NFHS) for all member states to follow. Thus, the playing rules are consistent across the nation. This way, an Ohio team playing in Indiana or Florida over Christmas break plays the game with the exact same playing rules as they would in Ohio. This Rebounders’ Report explains the very process used to create the nationwide high school basketball rules.

### Playing Rules are NATIONAL Playing Rules

The OHSAA is one of the 50 states and several provinces in Canada that are members of the “NFHS” ([www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org)). One of the many functions of the NFHS is to write playing rules for most sports. These playing rules are codified each year in the Rules Book for each sport. Though there may be a rule or two that the OHSAA sport administrator may not totally agree with, as a member of the NFHS, the OHSAA’s Constitution request it and its member schools agrees to abide by all playing rules adopted by the NFHS. Tennis, Golf and Gymnastics are sports that do NOT have rules written by the NFHS – rules have been adopted by the USGA in Golf, the USTA in Tennis and USA Gymnastics in gymnastics.

### The Committee & Representation on the “Committee”

Each sport recognized by the NFHS is represented by its “Rules Committee”. The “committee” is comprised of a representative from each of 8 “Sections” across the nation plus a representative from the NFHS Officials Committee and a representative from the NFHS Coaches Committee. These members serve staggered 4 year terms with an additional member elected as the Chair. Mr. Bob Gardner, NFHS Executive Director serves as the publisher and Theresa Wynns who oversees Basketball at the national level, serves as Editor.



The NFHS divides the US into 8 different ‘Sections’. Each Section elects one representative from the states making up that section to the Rules Committee. Ohio is part of ‘Section 2’ which includes PA, WV, KY, VA, DE

### Committee Members & Meetings

Current Committee Members in addition to the Editor and Publisher are:

**Ron Laird, Chair (Wyoming)**

**Dennis Ordway – NFHS Officials Rep. (NH)**

**Peter Webb – Sect. 1 (Maine)**

**Dan Ross – Sect. 2 (Ohio)**

**Mark Dreibelbis – Sect. 3(North Carolina)**

**Grant Rice – NFHS Coaches Rep. (Nevada)**

**John Dolliver – Sect. 5 (Nebraska) Nate Hampton – Sect. 4 (MI)**

**Joey Walters – Sect. 6 (Arkansas)**

**Jeaney Garcia– Sect. 7 (Hawaii)**

**Beth Holt – Sect. 8 (Idaho)**

The “Rules Committee” meets 3 times per year at the NFHS offices in Indianapolis.

### Input for Rule Changes

An important aspect of the Rule (change) Process is receiving input from a wide range of individuals involved in the sport. Officials and Coaches are represented by their representative to the Committee. Each Section is represented by its selected member. During the season, every sport administrator in each state is provided a list of survey questions regarding trends and current issues that may have developed during the year. Toward the end of each season, every school coach along with every registered Class 1 official in the nation is given the opportunity to respond to a survey about trends in the game. The results of this survey are the basis for the Committee’s agenda at its April meeting. Prior to this meeting, individuals across the nation (coaches, officials and administrators) are provided an opportunity to submit “Rules Proposals” to the Committee. These proposals must first be read and approved by the state association sport administrator (such as myself) and signed by the state’s Commissioner before submission to the Committee for consideration.

### Rule Change Proposals...What Happens Next?

Once proposals are received, the NFHS staff liaison meets with the Chair of the Rules Committee to evaluate the proposals and determine which proposals make the ‘all important’ next Committee meeting agenda. The agenda is provided to each state association for input and each state association administrator is contacted by the representative elected from their Section for feedback on the proposals. Any proposal that makes it to the agenda for discussion must be approved by a margin of 2 votes to be even be considered for possible approval.

- Those that DO make it to the agenda for discussion, the entire committee reviews the proposal.
- Vote is taken by the Committee and the proposal must pass by a margin of 2 votes to become a rule
- Any proposal that DOES pass by a margin of 2 votes now moves to the NFHS Rules Review Committee. This committee is comprised of NFHS staff member involved in writing rules. The object is to review for consistency with other rules.

### ***What Happens Next....continued***

- After review and (if) approval, the rule change is sent to the NFHS Board of Directors who make the final decision as to whether a rule change will take place.
- If the NFHS Board of Directors make no comment....**RULE CHANGE!**
- The NFHS Rules Book is changed, the Case Book is changed and the communication to all states, coaches and officials is developed.

**Note:** The Rules Review Committee or the NFHS Board of Directors will **not change** any proposal that comes to them, but they **MAY** refer it back to the original Rules Committee for further discussion.

### ***How does the OHSAA Implement the Changes?***

Each state is provided a News Release announcing any adopted Rule Change. This announcement generally takes place 3-4 months prior to the start of the season and is placed on the OHSAA's website and communicated to the Coaches' Association recognized by the OHSAA for that sport. Additionally, it is shared with the OHSAA's Director of Development for Officials in that specific sport. Then each of the following are scheduled and/or conducted:

#### **National Rules Interpretation Meeting**

Each state administrator logs on to a national webinar conducted by the NFHS Sport Administrator to review all Rule Changes, Editorial Changes and Points of Emphasis. This meeting offers an opportunity for open dialogue and Q and A's

#### **State (Ohio) Interpreters Clinic**

Each local officials' association has an "interpreter". These interpreters come to a meeting at the OHSAA to review the Rule Changes, Editorial Changes, Points of Emphasis and any official pertinent information. Their task of course is to take this to their local officials associations and convey it there. This meeting is conducted 2-3 weeks prior to the start of the season and conducted by the "Director of Development" (see inset) and the OHSAA's Sport Administrator (Jerry Snodgrass for Soccer)

#### **State Mandated Rules Interpretation Meetings**

Coaches and Officials across Ohio MUST attend a State Rules Meeting each year. The OHSAA has attempted to help both groups by offering the meetings online to provide a more efficient AND consistent message to all coaches. These meetings include review of OHSAA Rules and Regulations also.

#### **Local Officials Meetings**

In addition to the mandated STATE Rules Meetings, each official in the state is required to attend 4 additional meetings at their local association during the soccer season. These "**Local**" meetings have agendas/topics set by the sport's Director of Development.

#### ***Directors of Development Key Part of Rule Enforcement***

*In 2009, the OHSAA recognized "Directors of Development" to serve as the lead rules interpreter and liaison to officials for each sport the OHSAA sponsors. These "DOD's" have the responsibility not only of interpreting rules but also for providing educational opportunities for officials and recruiting new officials. The DOD's assist with tournament assignments while also developing meeting agendas for required 'local' officials association meetings.*

### ***Exceptions? Of Course there are. They are called STATE ADOPTIONS!***

So, here's the catch...yes, there are exceptions that might appear to blow everything 'out of the water'. These 'exceptions' are known as "**State Adoptions**" and are MINOR rules that are considered non-essential to the outcome of a game. Basically, any rule that is permitted to be adopted or not adopted by a state (therefore the term 'State Adoption'), is a rule that does not cause or create any fundamental difference in the game itself. One of the best examples would be the '3-pt line' in basketball. It is **NOT a 'State Adoption'**, meaning states do not have a choice whether to adopt it or not. If one state were to have the 3-pt line and another state not, it would create an anomaly within the fundamental rules of the game and eliminate the necessary consistency from state to state. And I know your next question....What ARE some examples of state adoptions? There are actually 8 in basketball. A few examples of "State Adoptions" are:

- States are permitted to determine on a state by state basis if players are permitted to wear head coverings for medical or religious reasons (Ohio DOES permit this...with permission)
- States are permitted to determine on a state by state basis if media time-outs are permitted (Ohio DOES permit this on a limited basis at state tournament games only).
- States are permitted to determine whether replay can be used at the conclusion of the game during state championships. (Ohio DOES permit this with limitations at the OHSAA Final Four only).

### ***So Now, The Million Dollar Question..."Do we HAVE to follow all the NFHS Rules?"***

**Q:** What if a state chooses not to follow all the Rules adopted by the NFHS or a selected Rule Change?

**A:** Or...let's use the more common question....What if Ohio decThat state loses its opportunity to be part of the National Rules Committee either by sitting on the committee or by supplying input through the various questionnaires. Kyle McNeely, the OHSAA's Baseball "DOD" recently served as the chair or the NFHS Baseball Rules Committee. Dan Ross, the OHSAA Commissioner, currently serves on the basketball rules committee.

Ohio would lose this opportunity if we chose not to follow NFHS Rules. Other OHSAA Staff members have served on their respective National Rules Committee'

### ***Wish to Purchase an NFHS Basketball Rules Book?***

You can purchase the NFHS Basketball Rules Book (along with any other sport's Rule Book) at [www.nfhs.com](http://www.nfhs.com)