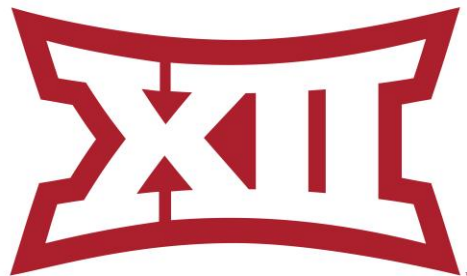


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An Interview With:

CURTIS SHAW

CURTIS SHAW: Thanks for letting me spend a few minutes. We started this last year, and I thought it went over well with the changes we're making in college basketball. So I kind of want to do a little quick recap and tell you where we're headed.

Last season, when we stood up here, we talked about changing the physicality of the game. I think there was a little gloom and doom between some media and some of the coaches that it will end up all free throws, we're going to chop the game up. Actually, the exact opposite happened. We ended up freeing up the basketball game, allowing our teams and our athletes to play basketball, to get in their motion, to get in their systems, and we got the results we wanted.

The results were not necessarily more shots a game, but better shots a game. We didn't allow them to get physically beat up. They could get open looks, and it helped the basketball game. Scoring went up a little over five points a game, and the fouls only increased by about two a game. So they had the desired results.

Due to last year's results, the positive aspects we got from the media, from the fans, from the coaches, from the players, the rules committee and the men's basketball committee decided to expound on that. The NCAA, we can only have a new rule change every other year. So this is a non-rule change year. But we are allowed to change our emphasis and take parts that are already in the rule book and really bring them to the front and enforce them in a different way than we ever have before.

With the success of the play on the ball last year and the results that occurred, we decided to expand that. We want to take that to all perimeter players. With or without the ball, allow them to cut, allow them to move without being

impeded, allow them to move without getting held, and take that part of the game to allow teams to, again, continue to get off better shots, not just necessarily more shots.

The rules committee also took a look at the post play. When we started to review, we found out that 65 percent of the fouls called in the post against the defense were because we missed the first foul against the offense. We were allowing offensive post players to come down the floor, blow the defender off the blocks, get an illegal post-up possession, and then hold them off that post-up position.

Then when the defender would come over the top, come back to where he needed to be, we would get them for a foul. So we realized we were penalizing the wrong person in allowing the freedom of movement in the game. So we focused on the perimeter players without the ball, the post players being legal from the initial start and maintaining the legality during the play, and also continue to enforce on the ball. Not allow the point guards, the man with the ball, to get physically beat up every play.

The rules committee feels like, if we will do these same things this year, it will help increase scoring again. There's been talk about lowering the shot clock. There was all kinds of talk about things to do to try to get more excitement in the game. With the results that we had last year of scoring going up, with what we think can occur this year with scoring going up, we really don't have to worry about shortening the shot clock or anything like that. That might get us more shots, but they might not be better shots. That doesn't help scoring.

The last thing we did, and we'll look at a few clips, was try to straighten out the blocked charge. We have tried for three or four years to figure out the terminology on the blocked charge that makes it teachable for a coach to his defenders and makes it a play the referees can do. Last year we butchered it. What we intended to do in June got changed in September, got altered in

November. By January 1st, I could watch film and couldn't tell you if it was right or wrong.

So we had to go back and find a way to simplify the rule for what its intention was. The whole idea of the airborne player, blocked charge rule, was really put in for safety. We don't want players sliding underneath a defenseless airborne player. We started with a three-foot restricted area arc, which helped a little because now the defenders had to be there quicker before the guy got airborne. We're looking at expanding that arc to four feet next year, which we think will help even more.

But we still have too many crashes that, when you watch film, we weren't getting correct. This year we went back and simplified it. Instead of worrying about upward motion, instead of worrying about primary defender, secondary defender, we said, that's too much to try to figure out in a split second. What can we do to help the game? Very simple, we put in the rule, or we interpreted the rule, it doesn't matter if you're a primary defender. It doesn't matter if you're a secondary defender. When the offensive player leaves the floor, the defender can no longer move other than to cover up and protect themselves, maybe retreat a step because they know they're going to get plowed. That sounds like a little thing, but it's great, because we can teach referees to be refereeing the defensive player, peripherally you see the offensive guy. When his foot leaves the floor, if he moves again, it's got to be a blocking foul.

So we don't have to worry about primary, secondary, were you legal? Can you slide to maintain it? Makes it easy for referees. It's also made it easier with our coaches because they can now teach their defenders, if you can't get there and be still before you leave the ground, don't try to because you're going to get a blocking foul. Go up, verticality, defend the rim, but don't try to draw a blocked charge.

So the intent of the rule for safety, the intent of the rule for not allowing our great athletes to be up in the air and get undercut, this will make it easier to get the play right. If they get a blocking foul or two, they tend to quit helping out. They'll get their legal, they'll go up and defend the rim.

So I think this year, the whole idea of the rules committee, let's continue the freedom of movement. Let's open the game up. Let's see if our scoring goes up, like it did last year. We'll get the desired results without having to do something drastic like changing the shot clock.

Let's look at a couple of plays just to give you some ideas, and we'll take any questions if you have them. This is the freedom of movement we've been talking about off the ball. A lot of times people in the media, the fans, you never pay -- sorry about that. You never pay attention because you're always looking at the basketball. At a time when I started refereeing, one of the things we talked about, if the ball's on one side of the floor and something occurs all the way across the floor, do we really need to interrupt the game and call it because it's not affecting the play? When talking to coaches and watching the plays, it does affect the play.

So even though the ball's not involved, if we don't allow this man right here to run his offense, they can't make their play. They can't get off the type of shot we need.

So we really focused this summer in our training sessions and the sessions last weekend with the NCAA, to take the responsibility of watching all the players off the ball. That's illegal contact. We want that called. We want it enforced from the start. We're not going to stand there and talk to you all day, let him go, let him go, don't hold them, we're going to call that. We want them to be able to run their offense.

Play two. Another example about plays away from the ball that we're not used to looking for, but if you look down here, the guy's trying to cut to get down to the wing pass, and that past that probably would have gotten away with. We probably would have allowed this defender to bump him and hedge him, but he's never legal. He keeps him from getting out to get the pass. He slows down the offense, keeps it from getting into rhythm. These are the types of plays that we're going to look for to call every possession this year.

Same thing on this type of play. Basketball's on the other end of the floor, but as we try to cut through, we're holding. We start holding down here on the baseline. We don't allow him to ever get to the pick to run his offense because we're fighting through the pick by moving him out of the way. These are the type of plays we're going to focus on from the start off the ball to try to help our teams get into a better offensive flow.

I may have told you last year, but one of the members of the rules committee said three years ago our time in the weight room became way more important than our time on the practice court.

That's not the intent of basketball. The instates helped a little bit by allowing our coaches to work with them more during the summer, to have some practice time, to have more preseason practice time with them. So all of that's helping instead of just hanging out with the strength coach all year. But we have to continue to do our part to keep this freedom of movement.

Here's the post play we were talking about. If you watch the illegal post-up, what we end up calling, we've got a defender who's holding him, holding him, holding him, and we finally get the offensive guy for saying get away from him. We have to see this play from the start. The minute we see the defender's hands go behind him, that has to be a red flag he's holding. Now he's illegally butting him off his spot. Now he's illegally swim stroking his arm. Now the offensive player finally says leave me alone, and we get it. So we miss four fouls before we get the wrong foul.

We have to do a better job, and we really focused on not allowing the offensive player to post-up illegally, and not allowing the defender to hold, causing the offensive player to react to the play.

This play here, it's hard plays because the ball gets swung going around. Watch this play on the post here. We'll see it in slow-mo, but we've allowed this offensive player to create three different fouls so his team ends up getting about six shots off before we have a rebound. But it's simply because we tend to let him play too much. So a play gets saved. Right now the offense is illegal. That's the first thing you want to look for.

Now the defender's trying to get around, and we end up with a wrestling match. Now the offensive player comes back, sets an illegal screen to allow the point guard to go to the basket. We haven't done a good job of making our offensive post players be legal, and it will be a big focus this year.

See that first move on the offense, and we end up calling a foul on the defense. Watch his initial post-up. Never legal. Goes into him. Throws into him. Throws the legal defender out of the way, and somehow we get a foul on the defender. That's the play that we taught referees to quit watching the basketball. Focus on who created the initial contact, and penalize the right player. If not, we end up with a post player on defense who's now got three fouls and has to go sit down, and we know the kid on the bench isn't as good. It doesn't help our game. It disrupts the

flow even more. We have to take care of the initial contact by the offensive player that's illegal.

Here's the blocked shot we talked about. Here's a play that last year was very hard to referee because you're trying to figure out if he's a primary defender, secondary defender. If he's primary, he can continue to move to maintain his position. If he's secondary he can't. Or when you see this view from the side, it's going to be pretty obvious this year it's going to be a lot easier to referee. A lot easier. They want to run a charge, trying to figure it out, watch the defensive player. All I have to do is watch him. He leaves the ground, he is still sliding sideways, I've got an easy blocking foul.

The coaches need to teach this kid don't try to draw in front of the charge. You're not going to get a charge at this point. Just go up with verticality. It will make for cleaner plays, and it will limit the safety factor by undercutting an airborne play.

These are the types of plays that we've done a poor job again of penalizing the offensive player when the defense does nothing wrong. We teach referees, if the defender does nothing wrong, no matter how ugly a play looks, it can't be a foul on the defense. It may be an offensive foul. It may be a no call. But it can't be a foul on the defense. We've got a perfect case here where the defensive player does a great job rebounding positions, long rebounds so they don't get it. I get perfectly set before he ever leaves the floor. I definitely get displaced because he leads by dropping his shoulder, and I don't reward him. That's a poor job by the referee of not rewarding the defensive player. That's what we teach them.

If you know what the defensive player is doing, if they're illegal as all times, you'll know what happened on the play and caused it to happen. No, that was an obvious charge. That was an obvious charge that we had a no call on.

Here's the play we talk about because of safety. This is really why the rule's in and really why we're going to increase this restricted area size. This is the player still stepping up and under, go down, we've got a chance for a major injury. This is a play we won't stop. Obviously, when he leaves the floor, he's trying to get out of the restricted area, he's still taking that last step forward. It doesn't matter if he got hit in the chest. It doesn't matter that he was squared up. He's moving when he leaves the floor. A lot easier to

referee, and a lot easier to teach as a coach.

When you get outside the area or even if you're in the area, if you go up vertically, that three-foot restricted area doesn't matter on the play. There is no blocked charge area if you are vertical. Teach the players to go up and defend, teach the referees not to let them move at all, and that helps our flow of the game.

I think that's all with the film clips, trying to explain what we're going to do this year and the new parts of what they tasked us to do to help the flow of the game and scoring to continue.

Any questions about it or comparing last year to this year and where we ended up?

Q. [No microphone].

CURTIS SHAW: I don't think there's an ultimate number. I always like to say, always remember it's not the referees. We only do what the NCAA and the men's basketball rules committee makes us do -- makes us. Encourages us to do. And the rules committee is made up of coaches. So they're the ones who decided the game didn't look well.

I think the Connecticut-Butler game in the Final Four a couple years ago, everybody said this is enough. We're not playing basketball anymore. So they try and adopt things that we can enforce to help the game. There is no magic number. Some coaches said we can't play defense anymore. Absolutely, you've always been able to play defense, but you're supposed to play defense by sliding your feet, keeping your body in front, not physically man handling somebody.

If the scores get in the 70's, the 80's, whatever happens, as long as it's free flowing, as long as it's legal, and as long as it allows us to get off better shots, not necessarily more shots, I think they're happy.

Q. [No microphone].

CURTIS SHAW: I would say that. We don't care what the points are. A team -- let's take for example, Rick Burgess, the chair of the rules committee this year, he's the coach at Belmont University. He plays a very flowing, they take off 30, 35 seconds off the shot clock, but they end up getting off good shots. If we physically don't allow them to get into that play, we're really disrupting the way they want to play, and the scores may be in the 30's. May be in the 70's. But as long as they can run the play freely and get a good look, that's the intent.

Q. [No microphone].

Can you tell us what the percentages were of blocked charge calls from two years ago last year and what the expectation might be for this year?

CURTIS SHAW: We did such a poor job last year, that by the end of the year, everything was blocked. A defender, just like we saw on the one play where the kid is standing here and gets plowed, we either no called or called the block because we can't know what to do. What we're trying to do is reward legal defense and allow undercutters, and it ended up we just penalized the offense all the time or penalized one game the defense all the time. If coaches couldn't teach it, we couldn't do it.

So it's hard to say what our percentages were because I don't think we got half of them right last year. By February, when I was watching film, trying to watch a game, I could slow it down, and with the interpretations we had, I couldn't figure it out. So I know they couldn't split second on the court.

The intent is not to have more charges, not to have more blocks. It's to make the defense be legal and help the safety factor to allow our athletes to get to the rim to teach players to play vertical instead of undercut.

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