

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Media Day

Tuesday, October 20, 2015

Curtis Shaw



CURTIS SHAW: The new style of play, the new rules, I know it's something you're asking questions about. In my 30 years of college basketball, this is by far and away the most important year I've ever seen. The Men's Basketball Committee, the NABC, the NCAA, and the new men's oversight committee all said our game has to change for all the various reasons that we know, whether you want to say it's scoring, whether you want to say it's style of play, whether it's fan interest, it really didn't matter. This all came together to bring in the most changes I've ever seen in college basketball.

I was actually the representative to the Rules Committee this year from the coordinators, so I was in the room for two days and heard everything that went on that was talked about, how we discuss things. And truthfully they came in with an agenda we have to change.

We also decided that in order to change, the new rules help us start that, but truly it's going to be about the way the game's officiated. So we came up with what we call the five major changes in basketball. Everybody's going to understand the 30-second shot clock instead of 35. I will tell you all the data we had. Coach Huggins kind of just said it. That five seconds did not make a lot of difference. It raised the number of possessions by like 0.6 a game per team. So it wasn't really enough to matter.

What will matter is the style that we are now going to officiate the game, which allows teams to get off better shots. You heard Coach Huggins say something about just more bad shots. We have to allow our players, as great of athletes as they are, to have the ability to get into their offense and get a good-looking basketball shot.

So really everything the Rules Committee did, and we as coordinators did after that, is to allow our players to play basketball. We somehow lost focus on the fundamental skills and we're going to try to bring that back.

We also understand this is going to be a painful process. The NCAA is doing a media blitz that will come out as the season goes on, talking about we understand this could hurt early. This may look ugly at

times and it may take getting used to. But for the first time, they're willing to stomach it and live through it.

I heard somebody asked Coach Drew about a couple years ago, we started this and we kind of stopped, and we did. Because midstream we kind of changed our rules and interpretations. We now understand we cannot do that.

I talked to the NBA, which in the early '90's had to change their game, and the NBA said, hey, we had 30 teams and only 60 referees, and it took us over two years to change our game. We've got over 800 Division 1 referees and 300-something schools, why do you think you can fix it in two months?

So we know this is going to be a painful process, but the more we do like this -- I go around and visit all the schools. I'm actually going to be at the West Virginia-Temple scrimmage. This is where we're going to get the work done so by the time we play and get into the conference season, hopefully it gets better.

So let me show a little video about the five major changes, give you some ideas of what we are going to do and then I'll take questions.

[Video playing]. The perimeter hand checks game in two years ago and we started out pretty well. Lot of fouls early, but players started to adjust. Two hands, forearm, a body bump, any of these things, it's a defensive player initiating forward into the ball handler, we're going to have a whistle.

Yeah, that means no more hot stove. What we're going to do, is if the offensive player is stationery, and you're coming out to measure up on defense with while they're stationery, we might let you get their space. As soon as the offensive player starts to move in any direction, there is no hot stove?

Here's an example of where we've allowed a player to put a forearm on a ball handler right there and ride him all the way to the basket. We found out through watching lots of video that that forearm knocks the ball handler just off balance where he can't turn the corner and then execute the shot. So any long contact left on the player who beat you will be called.

Again, as soon as the player tries to turn the corner, defense into initial position and initiate contact into the ball handler, we want an automatic whistle.

Hold the tape just a second. At times we talk about, well, we're disrupting them, what if we've got them beat and they can go for lay-up. Unfortunately, we've seen over the years, we try to hold our whistle, let them finish the play, and if something happens at the rim and they don't finish the play, then the coach ends up mad that we didn't call it earlier. We have told the referees, contact initiated by the defense, call it immediately, and let the players adjust.

The second part is the same type of contact, players off the ball, cutters, different players in the post, trying to post. But we've got to stop this kind of contact so we allow our offenses to run movement. There it was right in the post.

In the center of the lane you see, as the cutter goes through, the defender steps out and chucks him. It's a thing that's been taught, it's a thing that's been accepted, and it's a major change for how we're going to referee the play, and the players have to learn to defend it. The only way you can stop a cutter who is illegally cutting through is beat them to the spot with your body and stay in front of them. In no way you can initiate into them with an arm, a hip, anything. You have to be legal.

Again, the player away from the ball. Cutter trying to go down the middle of the lane. 25 just steps out and chucks him off his drive. Again, he's not legal. He's never in legal guarding position. He's sliding sideways and initiates the contact. Even though the ball is not involved, we want these plays called. Even if the ball is 40 feet away on the other side of the floor, our players have to be able to get in their offense, so we want these plays called instantly.

You can see the guard out front with his hands up, that's a great ploy they learned to do. Look, my hands are up, we're chesting, riding the players out with our body. Right now, he goes forward, drives the player backwards, never in legal position. This is a foul.

Watch the player come in, sticks the left hand out and then initiates with the body, that's going to be automatic. The players got really good two years ago at leading with a low forearm, thinking they were getting away with it. That is a foul now.

Part three is post play. We don't want mosh pits, and unfortunately, that's what we got to. We lost the art of boxing out legally, and we have to get that back. You'll see a good example here of where they're trying to do -- actually, this is just posting up play, not rebounding.

If an offensive player makes a legal post-up, which means they're in this position and they get the defense pinned on the back side, and they can move their back side to maintain it, we're not going to let them use a knee, a swim stroke or any other movement to get around.

I've had coaches going around saying, well, how do we defend the post? I said you've either got to front, beat them to the spot, double team or play from behind. You cannot, when you lose position, just displace the player who has gotten in legal position.

Great example with the knees and with the chest, the players throw their hands out, but then watch the knee in the post here. Left knee, rides him out. Left knee again. That's never legal. Hence the call. Even though the ball's not involved in the play, we're going to call these immediately.

What we allowed the defense to do that we've never done before to offset this, because our lane truthfully isn't wide enough, when a player can get the ball on the low block, he's only about four feet from the rim. So if we allowed the offensive player to catch the ball and the defender had to back off, he took one back dribble and he's at the rim. So we put in the rule that allows a defensive player to use a forearm bar in the back against an offensive player with the back to the basket in the low post area.

The post area is defined as three feet wide of each side of the lane all the way to the free-throw line. So any player in that area with or without the ball, back to the basket is considered a post player. So you are now allowed to brace on defense. That doesn't mean shove them off, doesn't mean pop them, but brace, so that when a player catches the ball in the post, you have a chance to defend without him backing you down.

This is going to do two things. It will stop the wrestling, and number two, we're hoping it helps our post players learn an offensive move. If somebody as big as Rico, for example, gets posted up on somebody my size, I've got no chance if I have to do this. But if I can do this, I can brace him. Then what we've learned from NBA players are the good offensive players learn to use the pressure to know which way to spin and make their move to the goal. So we're hoping this will help our players learn some offensive post skills and not just physical post skills.

The other thing we looked at in the post is so many times we were allowing the first player to come down, displace and hit, and the second player retaliate. So we worked hard all summer and following our clinics on finding that first contact. Whether you're offense or defense, if you make the first illegal contact, you want it

called.

Right here on offense, 55 steps out and just displaces it. We don't get that, so we come across the lane and it's going to get worse. Again, it's not about the bigger body winning. It's about playing basketball, beating your opponents to the same spot, and maintaining your position.

Watch the post play here. Pretty good so far. Now the offensive player decides he wants to get around the league with the defender, he's going to do the old swim stroke and can't believe it's a foul. But we want this called every time. We have to get the first player. That's perfectly legal defense. That's a swim. Automatic call whether the ball's involved or not.

Post players have to learn if they're in legal position, they're great. If not, you cannot use an illegal move to get there.

Again, offense is in the post. He saw 55 when he came down. The first move he made was stick his arm straight up. We have talked to referees. When a player posts up with his arm out, that's an immediate red flag. The defender then tries to come through that arm to guard, it's got to be a foul on the offensive post. You cannot allow them to hold you here or here, because as soon as you do that, the defensive player is going to fight through and we end up in a wrestling match and usually get the second guy. This is an automatic red flag to watch for the foul.

Here's the rebounding part I started talking about, this has to clean up. You have to learn to get in front of the player, legally box with your butt and hold them off. If you do that, we're not going to allow the player from behind to displace you. You'll see on this one, it's pretty obvious. He's beaten to the spot, so he rides them out like a football block. Those are automatic fouls. We have to clean up this foul of rebound.

The second part we want to do is eliminate the face-up chuck, turn and box. That is not a legal box out. If I run into a player to box him, and initiate and then turn, I've created a foul because that's just an illegal screen. So we're going to eliminate the face check to box out in basketball.

Here's the little play that the guards are great at that we worked hard on teaching officials to watch the reaction but don't get fooled. One little hand makes all the difference in the world. When you see a rebounder's legs kick out in front of him, that ought to be a pretty good sign you missed something.

Again, clean it up, the rebounding part of the basketball game is important. This is the most important. When

you're shooting a free throw, you've got a wide-open, 15-foot shot that you ought to be able to make the majority of. We don't shoot them well, but that's the problem. If you've got that wide open shot, your teammate in the second space is not supposed to get the basketball unless the inside man doesn't bend or the ball maybe bounces long.

Rebounding plays have gotten disgusting. We allow the guy in the second lane space to make the first move down under, and if you're bigger, you win. That is going to stop immediately. We're going to tell the players that you're allowed to step straight across or run an X play or whatever your coach wants. As soon as you touch and displace inside players, it's an automatic foul. If the first free throw goes in, such as on a one-and-one, and you can step in and say, hey, 52, you have to step straight across. If you initiate contact, we're going to call a foul. Okay.

But if the free throw is missed and the ball comes off and you're displaced, automatic foul. You have to learn to make the free shot, not just physically get the second shot, okay.

Probably the biggest thing we saw in watching film was illegal screens. We went to the NCAA Tournament and the Final Four, and a rough number was probably 50, 60% of the screens are illegal. We lost the art of setting the screen. The handoff dribble is a perfect example. Our players don't know how to set a legal screen anymore.

Back in the days when I played, you were taught to come up and set a jump stop to set the screen. We now allow the screeners to be moving at all times. So we put in definite guidelines for the players and the coaches.

If the screener is moving, he can never be legal. So the first thing the officials are going to look for is the guy who is setting the screen, does he move? If he is, he's not legal. On a handoff drive, you are a screener. You are no longer a ball handler. Therefore, once you let go of the ball, if you're still moving, you're an illegal screener.

Here's a perfect example. I'm no longer a ball handler. I slide into the player trying to guard the ball handler, that's an automatic foul. We talked about how do we run the pick-and-roll? Let's pause it a second. A legal pick-and-roll means I have to set a screen. The defender has to make contact with me, so now we both have right to the next position.

If I never let the defender make contact with me, and I roll first and he tries to go under, I'm setting a legal screen because there was no screen ever set. So

that's what we're trying to teach the players. A lot of the onus is on our guards to set the screen up. They don't know how to set the screen up. They don't wait long enough for their big man to get there and make a legal screen.

So we're really pressing to our coaches and our players and the preseason stuff, guards, you have to let your big men get there. Big men, once you get there, you have to be stationery. If you're moving in any way, it's an illegal screen.

Once you get set, you also can't adjust if the players' going to go around. If the guard doesn't do a good job of coming right off the screen, you can't now slide out, extend your leg. That's all illegal.

Part two of our screening problem is not only screens being stationery, but it's what we call the blind screen. Our rules read that a screen set in your field of vision, which means if I'm guarding Holly, my field of vision is right here, anything behind my hands is considered a blind screen. If you're going to set a pick from anywhere back here, you not only have to be stationery, but you must give your opponent a full step to turn and change direction.

We don't do that. We run right up, set the back pocket screen, set the misdirection screen. We take the one side, come around, set on the other. These are illegal. This is going to be the biggest play that's going to affect us early. I've seen some scrimmages so far, but we didn't set a legal screen. Players don't understand it because we've allowed it in the past. That is the major change we have to teach them.

Here's an example of the screen. It's a blind screen. It's not the field of vision. Number one, he's not stationery. Number two, he's definitely blind. So he must give him a full step to turn for contact or it's an automatic foul.

Here's another example where we don't do a good job. Screen's coming from the back pocket, I call it, so it's a blind screen. Therefore, he not only has to be stationery, he has to give him a step. He's not only not stationery, but he definitely doesn't give him a step.

It's a major change for how our kids have played. They're going to have to adjust to it, and we have to adjust and get it every time so they can make the play.

Here's a play where we set two screens. The double screen, he steps in, now he comes out. Again, back pocket, blind screen. Never gives him a step, extends his knee. These are automatic whistles, whether the ball is involved or not.

This is the type play we've allowed to occur again on screens. Set an illegal down pick, wide open three-pointer, and I've got a rebounding foul. We have to stop the physical activity.

Okay, you can stop it. That's enough.

I think the biggest thing that I said at the start, which is the whole key to this, we cannot allow the defensive player to initiate contact illegally. Vice-versa, we're not going to allow the offensive player to initiate contact on a legal defender who may be retreating, who may be straight up and down, and bail him out with a foul. We did that two years ago. We had too many guys just ducking their head, driving the basket, initiating contact, throwing something up and we were calling a foul. But we've worked hard to discern between the two. If we're not going to let the defense attack you, we're also not going to bail out the offense. It's going to be major changes.

I will tell you, at a scrimmage I was at last Saturday, there were 62 fouls. That was an (indiscernible) scrimmage, which is sometimes worse and because they know what they're doing.

But our players and coaches can all adjust. Every one of the players I've talked to have said we can do whatever we need to do as coaches, you just have to prove to us these are the rules you're going to call, and you're stick with it. I think that is the big onus on us for this season.

Q. (Inaudible)?

CURTIS SHAW: You can, but you can't talk to players to avoid calling, for example, what we just saw. Like I said, on the free throw, the one and one, the first one goes in, he shoved him under, we make them talk to him. If they initially post up, if it doesn't really displace one or the other, we can see they're getting physical, we may get to them the first dead ball.

And I don't want it to seem like dooms day, but we have to change the game. It's going to take drastic effort on behalf of the referees, the coaches and the players to do that. Our players are great, our coaches are great. They can do it if we're consistent in what we enforce.

It will be ugly early. A lot of non-conference games are mismatches in terms of talent anyway, it makes it even harder. I think as our players learn to play legally it will get better up and down the line.

Q. (Inaudible)?

CURTIS SHAW: Absolutely not. The end goal is to make our game a basketball game, and it really has lost track of that. Our focus has to be on athletic skills, allowing the freedom of movement, to allow our great

athletes to score and play the game. We're not necessarily looking for more shots, what we're looking for is the opportunity for our players to get better shots, cleaner looks at the basket without being in illegal contact.

We've talked to the NBA a little bit about the changes they went through, but not with a goal to be like the NBA. It's a whole different business, but it's still a basketball game.

Q. The blind screen, frequently with pressure trying to break it against the press, you'll see someone stand up forward in the back court and run the defender and knock them down. That goes away now?

CURTIS SHAW: That goes away, because if I'm standing there and, for example, you're guarding the ball and coming down blind, I'm now legal. I've given you a step to turn. The fact you didn't turn by the time you got to me, your teammates have to say, hey, back pick and you've got to adjust.

When it's illegal is when I ride up right behind you. I came to you instead of running you into me.

Q. I see. As long as he's stationery, your teammates have to help?

CURTIS SHAW: Absolutely.

Q. Can you talk about some of the experimental rules you'll be doing with the six fouls?

CURTIS SHAW: We're not doing any of that.

Q. You're not going to do that?

CURTIS SHAW: No, it was put out there if a league wanted to do it, they were allowed to. We're not doing it in any of the preseason exempt events. We're not doing it in any leagues that I know of. They may do it in the postseason NIT, but I don't think that's been decided yet.

I will tell you, I refereed in the Big East in the '90s, and we put in the sixth foul rule one year, thinking if we've got more fouls it will keep the better players in the game. It didn't. It allowed the other eight guys on the bench to all have an extra foul, and the number of fouls actually went up with no increase in the style of play. So it didn't work when we tried it before, and I really don't think we're going that way.

Part two of that is we play 40 minutes, so five fouls in 40 minutes is one every eight minutes. Okay? The NBA plays 48 minutes, so six fouls for 48 minutes is one every eight minutes, so our ratios are really the same as far as the number in terms of minutes played. So just adding a foul I don't think will help our game.

Q. Has there been any feedback or push back? It seems it's starting to become more prevalent where guys are leaning on, hey, I can go to the monitor. Has there been any discussion for changing the way plays are reviewed to the monitor or anything like that?

CURTIS SHAW: We're always discussing replay because it's a vital part of the game. I think our systems for replay are catching up with the replay issue. We now use in this league and a lot of the country a company called DV sports where the referees can actually go to the monitor. They've got a toggle switch and they can find their own plays. We're not at the mercy of the guys in the truck or finding the right look. So that's better.

Referees are always told you have to make a call on the floor before you go to the monitor. So, no, as far as the referees talk about, hey, we can always go look at this, no. You have to referee the basketball game like you would have before there were ever monitors. Then if a play occurs that you're allowed to go, you can go to double check what you've got.

Q. So two years ago, the emphasis on the freedom of movement kind of died once conference play started. Why would this time be different?

CURTIS SHAW: Because two years ago I truly think that some people in the hierarchy panicked. And I think some power coaches got to them and said, oh, you're killing us. We can't do this. We allowed a few people to alter their thinking so they put in a couple of rules interpretations, lack of emphasis, however you want to say it, in January which changed the whole way we called.

Now the NCAA and everybody under it has come out and said we understand we have to stomach this. We understand that this may take two or three years to do. But in order to fix it, we can't back off because maybe the style of play and two or three coaches or their opinions. We have to do what's good for the game.

Q. I certainly understand what you're talking about increasing points and freedom of movement and things like that. Some would say you're now in the NCAA and the committees are now trying to do that by simply eliminating defense, what would be your reaction to that? Certainly you would have to agree that offense now has -- I don't know if built in is the right word or not, but certainly an advantage.

CURTIS SHAW: And the word eliminating defense has never come up. We're not trying to eliminate defense. What we've done over the last 20 years, if you watch video from 20 years ago, they played defense. They played it by moving their feet to maintain position.

Illegal defense never had to do with the defense initiating contact. Somehow that became playing defense.

How many coaches have we heard saying get up into him, pressure him, get up. You see two defenders run into the guards. That's not eliminating playing defense. That's eliminating playing illegal defense.

If you go back and read the original 13 Rules of Basketball, it's pretty amazing. It says a player shall not push, shove, kick, trip, hold or impede an opponent. Wow, novel idea.

Seven years later we're trying to do the same thing. We're really trying to get basketball to where we've allowed it to slip over the last 20 years. It's not changing it. It's getting it to where it was originally supposed to be.

Thank you very much. And if any time during the season you need information about what's going on, please get in touch with Rob Carollo, and he can get questions to me.