

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Media Day

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CURTIS SHAW: Let's take a few minutes talk a little bit about what's going on in college basketball. Kind of an exciting time. I don't know if you all know, but our coach Bob Huggins was on the Rules Committee this year. In my 10 years in this role, 30 years in basketball, I'm most excited about what they did this year than anything for the good of the game, for the style of the game, where they want the game to go.

I think we're at a great time. As we all know in the Big 12, it's the hardest league in the country top to bottom. Every game is on one of the ESPN networks, the new Big 12 Network. We're scrutinized every time we play, everything that happens.

It's a great league and we got a great staff, I'm looking forward to the coming here.

Two things to talk about that we don't have on video are the widening of the three-point line, moved it back to the international distance, 22 feet, 1 3/4 inches around the top, 21 feet, 7 7/8 in the corners. We've done a lot of data over the last four years. The shooting percentages in the NIT tournament, some of the multi-team events really didn't change a whole lot. What it does is moves the floor out and provides more spacing for offenses to run.

I think it's going to be a good addition to our game, probably a few growing pains, but overall I think it's going to help us.

The reset of the shot clock. If the offense shoots, hits the rim, whether it's a free throw or live ball, and then retains possession, we're only going to reset to 20 seconds. The theory is you don't need the 10 seconds to get it down the court. This will provide more opportunities for scoring, more team possessions, and a livelier game.

I think it's going to be a great rule also. I think it's going to speed up the game, give us more opportunities to score.

One of the quirks in the rule that the media should know is it's going to reset to 20, if it hits the rim on a shot, even if it's 26. Let's say you had a quick transition, the guy pops a three, you grab your own and rebound



at 26, it's now going to go down to 20. It took the coaches a while to understand they could actually lose time on play, but it's going to get them to shoot quicker, get the offense going. Good rules.

We'll get ready for the video now. The first one is flopping. They're tired of the acting, tired of the drama. We want to play real basketball. We don't want players to have to embellish or fake in order to get calls. We put in some specific items to talk about.

You get one delay a game warning of any kind, including a flop. The second one is in a Class B technical foul, which is one shot, then put the ball back in play. It doesn't mean you have to get two flopping warnings to get a technical foul. It could be any kind of delays. We've really talked to the teams about not getting them confused.

It also is one warning per team, not per player. If one player gets one for head bobbing, the second one gets one for sitting down on the play, it's a technical foul.

The Rules Committee discussed this for a couple hours, from what I was told, and decided they wanted to be severe because they want it out of the game. The signal for flopping, the referee will do this, like you're playing down. That means they're going to have a whistle. When you blow that whistle depends on what's happening in the play. You're not going to kill a play if a guy is in transition for a layup. You're not going to kill a play if a guy is flopped on a charge, getting ready to dunk. You're going to wait till the play ends or it's a dead ball.

You could flop, get stepped on, get dunked on, and get called for a technical foul. It's a severe penalty to get it out of the game, okay?

There's three types: Jump shooters falling without being touched; players trying to draw a charge and getting minimal, if any, contact; and then the head snap. On all three of these, they are judgment. There may be some contact. We'll see the one where we're taking a charge. He may brush him. It doesn't matter if there's some contact. We have to rule whether the contact was sufficient for that act.

In the case of the head bob, you may even have a foul

called because the guy did go out and hand check him, but then he embellishes it by throwing the head back. You may have a foul, and he'll still get a warning or technical foul for the flopping, okay?

Example of a jump shooter. Nothing is going on on the play.

On this play, the official would initially give this signal, he would then see the results which go against the rebound, and they got a guy streaking, so you're going to wait, see if he throws a home run pass and gets a chance at a layup. If they didn't stop it and pull it out, throw it out of bounds, then you'll kill it, go to the table and report the flopping warning, okay?

The next one is an example of a sit-down play. Guy gets in the lane, acts like he's going to take a charge. The guy driving the basketball slips him. There may be some minimal contact, but there definitely wasn't enough to drive him to the floor without him sitting down on his own.

As you can see in this case, white dumps it off, misses the first layup, gets the right hand, makes the second layup. We're going to let him finish the play. They're at a scoring advantage, let him finish the play, get the two points and technical foul for flopping, or a warning if it's the first or second.

The last play is the head bob. Here is a case where he does get fouled; however, he doesn't need to embellish with the head bob. Even though the referee calls the foul, you then now have the foul on the defense, you have the warning or the technical foul on the offense for the head bob.

Three specific plays that they want taken out of the game. We're going to try to make them a severe penalty at first because players will adjust and stop when they know it's a penalty.

Class B technical fouls, you get three per player before he's ejected, different than the flagrant fouls, okay?

The next section we want to go through is post physicality. In a lot of ways, we've taken most of the defense strength to defend away. We won't let them get up on you. Can't put your hand on them. Can't drive them out, put your knee in the butt. We could not allow the offense to then take advantage of that when it's hard enough to play defense.

In the past, we've had plays to where we would say, Let the big guy settle in the post, who can get what, wait till the ball is tried to enter. No more. If we're not going to let the defense play that kind of aggressive, contact plays, we can't let the offense put them at a

disadvantage.

We're going to have an immediate whistle instead of waiting for the result.

The first play, big kid comes off the baseline, clearly just decides he's going to displace the defender, moves him up the lane with his body. Automatic whistle. Whether they throw the ball into him or not, the minute he makes that displacement, we've got a foul.

The defender has a right to their place on the floor. It's not the biggest person wins the spot. Defender beats him to the spot, the offense strictly displaces him, we want to whistle.

Same thing goes on a post-up play. Posts up, instantly pins him. In the past the ball is kind of being passed back and forth out front, we'd wait and see what happened on the play. No more. If he pins him like that, the minute it's seen that he's holding the defender who can't get around, we're going to have a whistle, even though the ball is not involved.

The other one is a defensive foul where the offense does a good job of getting to where they want and defender shoves him out of the block once he gets up in the air. This is the case, we're not going to let the defense do it, not let the offense do it. As the Rules Committee said, we want our post players to learn offensive scoring moves. We don't want just bull-action type plays in the post.

Our next play, here is an example of running through, illegal screener in the post play. Again, post physicality that we're going to address immediately.

Let's go to traveling. If we're not going to let the defense come out and guard you, we're not going to let them put the hands on, we cannot allow the running head start.

Traveling has been our worst call in college basketball the last five or six years. We're terrible at it. During the summer training session, we're changing who looks at plays, we're trying to get more assistant to the footwork. Whoever is looking at the footwork, especially when a guy is in the post and the league is concentrating on the big guys, people come in to help him.

We have put in a policy this year that excessively missed traveling can result in referees being held accountable. They're held accountable for everything they do, but especially this play. We've got to get it out of the game or the defense has no chance.

The first play is an example of what we call the slip

travel. He slides his pivot foot, shuffles it to get started. There's no way the defense can stay in front of him. Huge advantage in the dribble.

Second play is an example of what we call a split foot travel. Get the ball at the top, separate and move both feet. It's the LeBron James running in place to get started play we call it.

Third example in the post. Here is where it's really hard because the lead official is watching the big bodies down there, and all of a sudden he picks up and replants his pivot foot to get around the defender. We've designated the outside officials to come and help with this play instead of relying on the guy who is right in front of him.

As I've talked to coaches, Don't get surprised by a whistle by the guy who is not the closest guy to the play. We want him on these plays.

All those were properly called. We'll get to the next one.

Here is some we missed and why we cannot miss travel, because look at the advantage. Here the white gets the ball, picks up, resets his pivot to get a jump-start running. No way for the defender to stay in front. We give up an easy layup. We cannot miss this type of play or it's two points and the defense is helpless.

Again, we've designated other officials to help.

Here is going to be the biggest play of the year, especially early, the step-back move. The college game watched the NBA, watched the James Harden move and said this isn't legal. It's to the point where the NBA didn't like what was happening. They've even changed their rule. They're not going to allow the James Harden step-back.

The rule is, if he steps back off one foot and then lands one, two, it's a travel. So what we've told the teams is all step-back moves are going to be called travels except if he can push off one and simultaneously jump back and land on two at the same time.

It's a reverse jump stop, going backwards instead of forwards, he then can lift his shoe. If you push off one, land one, two, we want it called every time because it's indefensible. We want it taken out of the game.

I think you're going to see a lot of that early. The schools I've been to already, that's what we're talking about. The players are all asking great questions, looking for examples. Hopefully we get it cleaned up before it gets too out of hand.

Protecting jump shooters. There's a big concern of injury. You don't want one of your star players take a jump shot and come down on a defender's foot because he stepped underneath him.

In the past the NBA had the rule that if they step under, they couldn't come down on him or it's a defensive foul. We didn't, because by our rules, if his feet were flat on the floor, he was technically in legal position. No more. We have to allow a shooter to be able to come all the way down to the floor no matter where he is before you can initiate contact on the defense.

Good example, the defender is jumping what we call A to B, jumping at him, not straight up. Comes down, the offensive player makes contact with his leg. We have a defensive foul. It's on the defender, his responsibility to allow the shooter to come to the floor because he's in a vulnerable position.

Here is an example of a play you hear fans and players all the time, He jumped into me. The rule on this play is the offense, as long as they're jumping to their basket, has the right-of-way. A defender can jump straight up, A to A we call it, be legal. Any time the defender is moving forward at a shooter, the onus is on the defense and it's a foul. It's up to the defense to avoid him.

Leg kick outs is the result of this play. If a defender would clear an offensive player, I'm shooting, he passes in front, he would clear me without me making an unnatural movement, whether that's jumping sideways or throwing my leg out, then the defense is legal.

In the past, if an offensive player kicked his leg out, a defender who would have cleared him hit him, we had a no call. We wouldn't call a foul on the defense. But the Rules Committee wanted it penalized. It's now an offensive foul. If you're outside your normal shooting motion, you cause contact with the defender, you're at risk of a player controlled foul or a flagrant foul. Here is one coming up you'll see.

In this case the defender would have passed in front and not made contact. The shooter makes an unnecessary leg kick causing the trip. This is now an offensive foul. Because the ball has been released, if it goes in, it will count, then you'll have a foul on the offense.

The additional leg kick we had was a play we had in the Texas-Baylor game last year where Baylor is taking a shot at the end of the first half. As he shoots, Texas defender flies at him. He clearly hits him on the arm. However, after or almost simultaneously being hit on the arm, the shooter realizes he's going to fly by, he

kicks his leg this way. They're both really high in the air. They go down very violently.

That's an example where even though we had a foul on the defense for hitting him, the offensive player made an unnecessary and dangerous move, we would penalize both. Three-point foul, then a flagrant foul for kicking him and putting him in an excessive contact danger situation. Flagrant foul is reviewable. If we have a leg kick, we're not sure if it's like the first one, not that severe, then we can always go look at it.

On this play where he clearly hits him, clearly kicks his leg out, really high in the air, in a vulnerable position, we can go to the monitor because we're looking at a flagrant foul.

In this case, Baylor would have got three shots, Texas would have shot two, then had the ball out of bounds with I think .7 to go, something like that.

The last play we don't have on film, but I want to talk about, is the dive on play. Loose ball on the floor. Coaches for years: Get down, get on the floor, get after it.

It's gotten to a safety factor. A guy will be laying on the floor, either reaching for the ball or holding the ball, we pile on him like football. No more. If you jump on a player laying on the floor, it's automatically a foul. Whether they have the ball, whether you're going for the ball, doesn't matter, you cannot jump on a vulnerable player on the floor, which is part of the safety, like the leg kick.

I think those are the main points for this year. Those are the points to open the game up, those are the points for safety, and to take out some of the "trick the referee" type plays. I think it's going to help our game. I think it makes it a little more precise to officiate with better guidelines, especially in the physicality in the post. I'm looking for another great year in a great league.

Any questions?

Q. Post play is something you've tried to clear up for the last number of years. Ideally what would you like to see in the post? The defender making the choice to play from behind or in front, and then basically two guys standing next to each other without the elbows? Ideally what would you like to see the post play become?

CURTIS SHAW: I think the post play has gotten so physical and bad, as one coach said, We worried about more time in the weight room than we did learning basketball skills. We wanted that out.

We slowly started to take away the defense being able to displace them, push them, body them out. But in order to do that, now we can't let the offense be the initiators to pin them down or move them out.

Ideally, yes, if a defender is in a spot, the offensive player can't move him. If the offensive player has a spot, the defender has a choice: front him, stay straight behind him, stay in front of him, ideal post-up position, the touch-down position so you're not pinning, then the defense can decide what to do.

One of the things the Rules Committee is talking about is widening the lane. If we get to that point, we have to have more offensive skills in the post. Can't just be a bull rush. We have to learn offensive jump shots, whatever you want to do. I think this is leading to all that.

Q. With the widening of the lane, are you going to more international rules? Do you see a time where the shot clock will get down to 24?

CURTIS SHAW: I don't think that. I think they're pretty happy with the shot clock by just doing the 20 second in the front court. We've gone to the FIBA international lane. I think we did study for about four years to get good data on that.

The widened lane is really hard to get data on. You can't really chart did they shoot better or whatever. So what the Rules Committee did this year is they sat in a room, and on this big screen they had a FIBA game, on this big screen they had a college game. They showed the difference about the spacing, the ability to cut, the ability to run different sets.

I think what's going to happen is as we get this part of the rule settled, they're just going to have to make a change with their naked eye saying it does provide better spacing.

The other international rules, I don't know that they apply quite the same. I think the shot clock is pretty good. I think the three-point line is pretty good. Now we decide on the lane.

Q. As far as flopping, some would argue there's an art to selling a foul. Do you think there's still a balance there?

CURTIS SHAW: It's strictly got to be determined was the contact severe enough for the defender to make that reaction. I was at one of our team's practices the other day, they're running a trap play. The kid on defense runs up. The offensive player barely hits him, stops on contact. This guy threw 17 feet across the floor.

You have to determine the severity of the contact to cause the reaction to the defensive player.

Q. The James Harden step-back, how difficult is it to police that? Happens so quickly. How hard is that going to be for officials to catch that?

CURTIS SHAW: We've struggled a little so far in closed scrimmage and stuff. I think we're getting better because it's like the teams, we watch film after every game. It's a matter of seeing it.

Really all you have to judge, did he step back. That's pretty easy to see. Did he land one, two. If he landed one, two, it's got to be a travel.

Q. You mentioned trying to make this a more lively game. Is there a specific kind of number you want to see, like 75-70 scores, or is it more you want a year-over-year percentage improvement?

CURTIS SHAW: Again, when we say all this, the Men's Oversight Committee kind of sets the tone for where they want to see the game. The Men's Rules Committee is charged with getting us to that point. Referees don't do anything except do what we're told, to enforce it.

I'm not sure there's at point number. It's let's take the physicality, that type of play out. Let's allow these great athletes to use their skills and ability to have the most open, free-flowing game there is.

I remember when the NBA scored 140 points a game, and then the Bad Boys, they got down in the 60s, and they didn't want that. I think that's what happened when we have the Final Four game that was 52-50.

Everybody said, This is not what we want.

Everything has gone to a more athletic, free-flowing game as opposed to the physicality.

Q. Is there one rule change that is going to be the emphasis that you feel is the most positive?

CURTIS SHAW: I think taking the "fool the referee" plays out is going to be huge. If we get rid of the flopping where a guy has to make a decision, the fans are going wild, I think that will help.

I think the biggest thing is the 20-second reset. They think it's going to average about four to five possessions per team more in a halfcourt game. That provides more scoring opportunities, a more lively game.

Q. Replay continues to be a bigger aspect in college sports. Has there been any talk about allowing coaches to challenge plays, like we see in

pro sports? How will replay continue to move on in officiating?

CURTIS SHAW: I think the replay part of the game is difficult. We're different than football. We're different than replay in baseball because you have dead sequences after they have a play. We don't. We're free flowing. Then stopping that free flow makes for a difficult time.

The world's philosophy of everything has to be perfect factors into that, though. We really want to get it right. If everybody at home has video technology that shows we get it right, then why shouldn't we go use it as referees to get it right.

I think there's an art to the flow of the game, an art to know we're two minutes into a game, do I really need to look at this minuscule thing, or is it two minutes to go in the game and this can really affect the outcome of the game.

One of the things that worries me in the replay was the Kentucky-LSU game last year that was not reviewable. The Rules Committee spent three or four hours on it and still couldn't come up with a way to do it.

So now we're going to review basket interference and goal tending, but you can only do that if a whistle is blown on the floor. We've put in a rule, another review time, one that's hard to do, but they didn't even fix the problem they were trying to do.

The Rules Committee is very cognizant of not spending the whole day at the monitor, but the pressure is on to get more done.

I think the NBA's coaches being able to challenge will be a test ground of what we do in the future.