



COVID-19 Rules Interpretations and Play Situations
By Art Hyland, Secretary Rules Editor, NCAA Men's Basketball Rules Committee
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The NCAA Men's Basketball Rules Committee met on October 23, 2020, and authorized the following rules interpretations and clarifications to be effective only during the 2020-21 basketball season.

1. Scorers' and Timers' Table – Normally the Scorers' and Timers' Table is located on the same side of the court as the Bench Area. Due to COVID-19 issues, it is permissible to have the Scorers' and Timers' Table on the opposite side of the court from the Bench Area. If this option is selected, it will most likely mean moving the team bench areas rather than the Scorers' and Timers' Table due to all the electronic connections necessary to operate the equipment at this table.

When this option is selected, the host institution should have either an "X" or an NCAA logo at the division line across from the Scorers' and Timers' Table as an indicator as to where incoming substitutes should sit or stand until beckoned into the game by an official. Incoming substitutes should stand, face the Scorers' and Timers' Table and wave at the Scorer to ensure proper entry into the game. While awaiting entry into the game all substitutes should maintain adequate spacing.

Except where specifically stated above, all other Team Bench and Scorers' and Timers' Table provisions of Rule 1-21 remain in full force and effect.

In addition, institutions that elect to move team benches to the sideline opposite the Scorers' and Timers' Table should also use tape on the court to designate the limit of the 28' bench area and the 38' coaching box per the Court Diagram on Page 13 of the 2020-21 NCAA Men's Basketball Rules Book. This will ensure adequate spacing for incoming substitutions.

2. Team Bench Area – Rule 4-3.1 defines the "bench area" as being bounded by the outer edge of the sideline beginning at the 28-foot line and extending beyond the end line. The depth of the bench area extends from the outer edge of the sideline to the back of the team bench.

For the 2020-21 season only, this rule has been amended as follows:

- a. The team bench may consist of multiple rows where space is available to allow for increased social distancing.

- b. The bench area now begins at the 38-foot line and extends down the sideline to a point beyond the end line. The line defining the bench area may then make an “L” shaped turn at a point at least 6 feet beyond the end line. This “L” shape may extend no further than 3 feet outside the nearest lane line. This part of the bench area may never invade the six-foot restraining area located beyond the end line. See Court Diagram on Pages 12 and 13 of the 2020-21 NCAA Men’s Basketball Rules Book.
- 3. Technology on the Bench – Many conferences have already been granted waivers for the 2020-21 season to allow the use of technology on the bench for coaching purposes. The rules committee encourages conferences to apply for this waiver which would enable team personnel to receive live statistics in the bench area by electronic means rather than in paper form. All of the waivers issued to conferences thus far are amended now to include the following:
 - a. The waiver now permits the conference to use the experimental rule in both conference and non-conference games as long as the home conference/team supplies the same technology in equipment and number to the non-conference visiting opponent.
 - b. The home institution must inform the opposing visiting non-conference team prior to game day that the home institution’s conference has received a waiver to use the experimental rule. In addition, the home institution should explain the specific technology available to the visiting team so that both teams have a clear understanding of the technology that will be available.
 - c. A maximum of four hand-held devices such as a laptop computer may be utilized by each team to receive live data/statistics in the bench area. Both teams must have the same hardware and number of devices. If all of the devices a team is using were to go down, leaving them with no working devices, the opposing team would also need to stop using their devices. However, if a team is using more than one device and one of them were to go down, the opposing team would not be required to stop using one of their devices. The use of live video is not permitted. A copy of a typical waiver can be found under “Updates” [here](#).
- 4. Coaching Remotely – The NCAA Men’s Basketball Rules Committee voted not to approve granting waivers for remote coaching/communication to the bench area on either a universal or a case by case basis.

The Men’s Basketball Rules Committee continues to consider other ways to accommodate coaches and players with rules waivers/interpretations during this season. We will communicate these changes to the membership as they are finalized. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me if you have questions. (art.hyland@comcast.net)