



FIBA REFEREES MANUAL

Individual Officiating Techniques (IOT)

version 1.1

**This Referees Manual is based on
FIBA Official Basketball Rules 2020.**

**In case of discrepancy between different
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female gender. It must be understood that
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Chapter 2

2. INDIVIDUAL OFFICIATING TECHNIQUES (IOT)

1. INTRODUCTION

Individual Officiating Techniques (IOT) is the most important foundation for either 2 Person Officiating (2PO) or 3 Person Officiating (3PO). It is evident that in the past 15 years there has been a heavy focus on 3PO (namely for the mechanical movements of the referees on the floor). This has led to a lack of knowledge in how to actually referee individual play phases in the game – this being the fundamental skills that referees need to possess in order to process and facilitate the correct decision. These are inherent skills of IOT and are similarly relevant to both 2PO and 3PO.

In analysing play phases and calling the game, some basic principles are necessary to follow:

Have proper distance from the play – keeping an open angle and remaining stationary. Do not move too close to the play and narrow your field of vision.	Distance & Stationary
The priority of the referee in an on ball competitive match-up is to focus the attention on the illegality of the defensive player whilst keeping the offensive ball handler in your field of vision.	Referee the defence
Always look for illegal actions to call.	Active mind-set
Have the key players (1on1) or as many players as possible in your field of vision in order to see any illegal action.	45° and Open angle
Understand when the play has ended so you can move to the next play –mentally / physically.	Stay with the play until it is over

The lack of adhering to the above mentioned principles are the main reasons for wrong decisions being made on the floor. Simple as that!

When referees are able to have proper primary coverage for all obvious plays, it will substantially increase the quality of refereeing. These obvious plays, if missed, are the determining factors in peoples' mind as to what constitutes an acceptable level of officiating.

“Primary Coverage in Obvious Plays”

2 DISTANCE & STATIONARY

Target: To identify and understand the key points and impact of maintaining a proper distance from the play and being stationary when refereeing competitive match ups.

Many referees have the tendency to think that moving up and down the court and being very close to the play helps them to make correct decisions.

Therefore, we need to understand and focus on these two main issues:

1. Distance - When refereeing the play, it is important to maintain an appropriate distance from the play, without getting too close. The referee can lose perspective, as all movements appear to look faster. Imagine yourself watching the game from the upper deck of the stand and you will see that the players' movements look slower than at the court level. They only appear to look that way, but obviously they are not.
2. Stationary - Often referees that are engaged with the play are not conscious as to whether they are moving or not when the action starts. It is common sense that if we want to focus on something it is best to do so whilst stationary. These same two principles apply to refereeing.

If a referee has the proper distance from the play (3-6 meters):

- a. The possibility of an emotional or reaction call decreases.
 - b. He can maintain a perspective as movements look slower
 - c. He can maintain a wide angle, which increases the possibility of seeing more players in the field of vision.
 - d. He is able to see the big picture (next plays to follow, control the clocks, identify where partners)
- If a referee is stationary when he is making a judgment:
- e. His eyes are not bouncing and concentration increases
 - f. A correct decision is more likely due to being focused and concentrated.

It is important that a referee must move to be in the right position to see the gap (this is different than position adjustment); and must do so as quickly as possible. Stop, Observe and Decide.

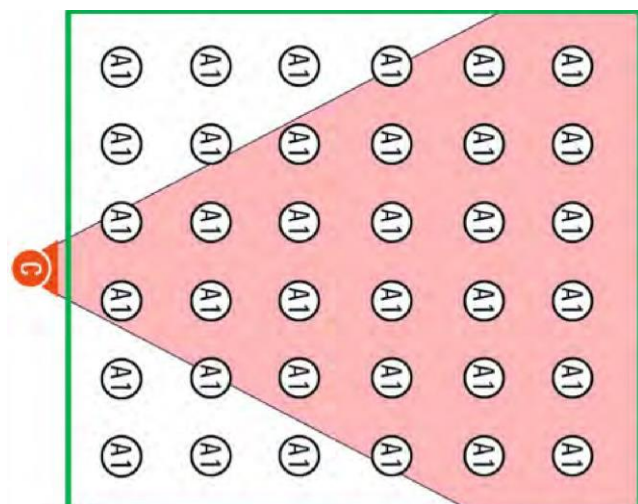


Diagram 1:

Proper distance creates wider angle and the referee is able to have more players in his field of vision at the same time. Example in the first row 2 players, second row 3 players, third row 4 players, etc. Totally 26 players out of 36 (72%).

2.3 REFEREEING THE DEFENCE

Target: To identify the primary focus when analysing a 1 on 1 play.

The concept of refereeing the defence is one of the corner stones for accurate basketball refereeing. Essentially, it means that the priority of the referee in an on ball competitive match-up is to focus the attention on the illegality of the defensive player whilst keeping the offensive ball handler in your field of vision. The referee is required to get into a position that allows them to clearly see the defensive player.

Note: We are not refereeing the space between the players, we are refereeing the defence itself - but you need to have a position where you see the space between players in order to referee the defence.

When refereeing on ball focus your attention on the illegality of the defensive player!

4 STAY WITH THE PLAY

Target: To understand how to increase quality control in plays situations.

On occasions, referees miss an obvious foul. Unfortunately, it often looks like the only persons in the arena who missed the obvious foul were the two or three persons on the court who have the whistle. The key to correctly calling these obvious plays is by adopting a professional discipline – that is to be patient and careful every time you referee the play. It is expected referees will “stay with the play until the end of action” (that is keeping your eyes and attention on the play until it has ended).

Practically, referees need to implement strategies:

- a. mentally focussing on the defender until the play has come to its end e.g. shooter has landed, in penetration defender has landed.
- b. physically do not start to move. Trail/ Center stepping backwards on the shot – has the potential for the referee to mentally release the play before ball has entered the basket or the defensive team has gained control of the rebound.

Processing the play (Patient Whistle)

Before blowing their whistle referees should process the entire play from the start - through the development - until the end before making a call. This will produce more analytical decision instead of only seeing the end of the play and reacting to it (emotional decision).

2.5 POSITIONING, OPEN ANGLE(45°) AND ADJUSTMENTS

Target: To understand the impact and technique of maximising the number of the players within your field of vision at all times.

It has been stated that referees must always look for illegal actions (something to call). Logically, if a referee has more players in his field of vision, the chances of seeing illegal actions dramatically increase. Namely, those referees who have positioned themselves on the court with proper distance and a wide open angle, are more likely to have a higher level of accuracy thus leading to a higher standard of performance.

Analysis proves that the concept of maintaining an open angle is not necessarily well understood by referees. Often referees who have established an open angle, unnecessarily move again, losing the open angle and becoming straight lined on the play.

A second key principle is to have both Lead (L) and Trail (T) on the edge of the play (players and ball). This way referees are able to maintain as many players as possible in their field of vision. As a result, it is important for Lead to move on the baseline with ball (mirroring the ball) and for Trail to always be behind the play (between the last player and basket in the backcourt). The following diagram demonstrates the advantage of being at the “edge of the play” and having a 45° angle.

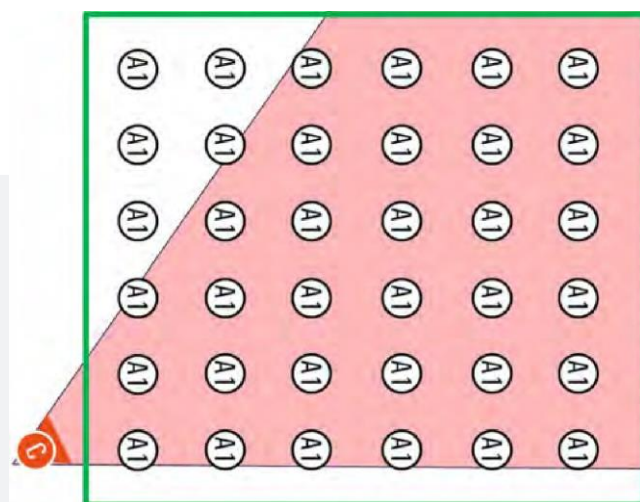


Diagram 2:

It is important to find a position and angle on the court where the referee is able to observe as many players as possible. If you compare the number of the players covered with Diagram 2, you will find that with 45° and an “edge of the play” adjustment, a total of 32 players out of 36 (89%) are covered at the same time.

The principles for positioning and open angle are:

- Move to the right spot and establish the open angle
- Anticipate (mentally one step ahead of the play) where you need to be
- Adjust to the play to maintain the open angle (step here, step there)
- Always move with a purpose, know where you need to go and why
- Go where ever you need to go to be in the position to referee the play (different to the Working Area)
- If the initial position is correct – there is a less need to move, but do not be STATIC (you need to adjust all the time according to the play and players' movement).

6. PRE-GAME CONFERENCE AND USE OF FIBA IREF PG APP

Target: To know the topics that have to be covered during the pre-game conference and what functionalities are offered by the App.

A pre-game conference is absolutely necessary. The concept is to ensure you and your partner(s) are on the same page when officiating together. This promotes good teamwork and good officiating.

Some general topics for pre-game discussion are:

1. Know your areas of responsibility on the floor and avoid having both referees watch the ball and the players immediately surrounding it.
2. Referee the play away from the ball when it is your primary responsibility.
3. With double calls, establish eye contact with your partner before proceeding with your signal. Remember: The referee nearest to the play or towards whom the play is moving shall have primary responsibility.
4. Give help when required on out-of-bounds situations, but only when requested to do so by your partner. Get into the habit of establishing eye contact.
5. Try to know at all times, not only where the ball and all the players are located, but also the location of your partner.
6. In fast break situations, especially where the offensive players outnumber those on defence, let the nearest referee make the decision on whether or not to call the foul. Avoid the temptation to make a call when you are ten (10) metres or more away from the action.
7. Blow your whistle for a foul only when it has an effect on the action. Incidental–marginal contact should be ignored.
8. Establish your standards early in the game. The game will become easier to control. Rough and over-aggressive play must always be penalized. The players will adjust to the way you allow them to play.
9. Try to maintain the best possible position and a wide angle of vision between the defensive and offensive players. Be on top of the play having proper distance and being stationary when you make the decision (call or no call).

To help the referees in this matter, FIBA has developed an FIBA iRef Pre-Game App that can be easily used everywhere to help the referee crew to prepare for the game.

You can download the application from Apple App Store or Google Play Store.



2.7 MAKING A CALL, DECISION MAKING AND COMMUNICATION

Target: To know how to make the call and being able to immediately communicate the decision verbally and with standard hand signals.

Sometimes we underestimate the value of simple basic techniques in creating the solid foundations of successful basketball officiating at the top level.

When blowing the pea-less whistle it is important to have enough air (force) in a short period to enter into whistle. This creates the strong decisive sound. Given the need to communicate verbally the decision after making the call, it is imperative we retain some air in our lungs.

Therefore following key points are important:

1. Technique how to blow the whistle – strong short blow (“spit”) into the whistle - one time.
2. Release the whistle out of the mouth after making a call.
3. Indicating the relevant signals for the decision.
4. Support your decision verbally “Foul blue 5, offensive foul; Travelling etc...”
5. Less is more – remember less and once you indicate/state something, the power of the message is stronger (practice the key words and how to articulate them clearly).

1. MAKING A ‘NO-CALL’

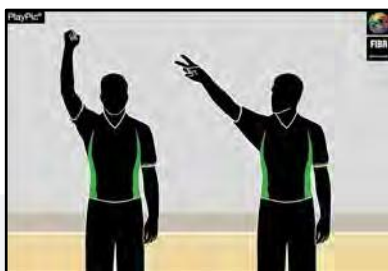
Referees are to use official signals only. Where a referee is making a decision on a play and a no call situation eventuates, referees are not to demonstrate or use other signals for the ‘no call’. This is particularly relevant in such situations where your partner sees an illegal action on the same play due to having a different angle and actually makes a call.

2. MAKING AN OUT-OF-BOUNDS CALL

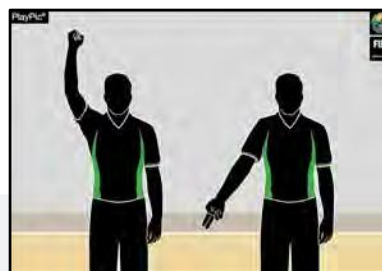
When calling out-of-bounds plays referee should always support their decision verbally i.e. saying “blue ball” at the same time as showing the direction. This will be very useful if you accidentally point in the wrong direction.

3. MAKING A FOUL CALL

It is important to communicate your decision to players and other participants clearly and quickly. In act of shooting situations people are eager to know whether there will be free throws or not. To avoid confusion in these situations referees should communicate their decision immediately by using appropriate authorized signal.



Foul in Act of Shooting (FAOS)



Foul not in Act of Shooting (FNAOS)

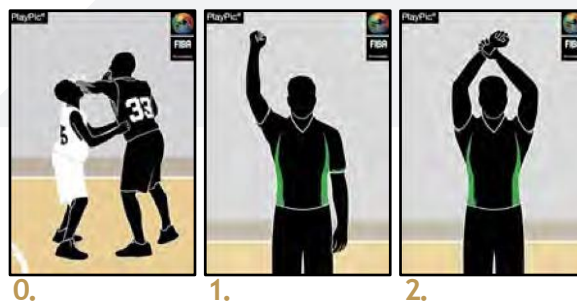
Note: These signals should only be used when there is an act of shooting situation or potential act of shooting situation.

Unsportsmanlike foul - 0-1-2 technique

When calling a situation with a potential UF action, the following protocols should be used:

1. Make the decision to call something
2. Indicate foul signal first (gives time to process what criteria is used for UF)
3. Upgrade the signal for UF

Referees should avoid showing the UF hand signal directly when calling a foul.



3 point shot, foul & basket

When calling a defensive foul in the shot; the following protocol is to be used:

1. Shot is taken – 3 Point Attempt Signal
2. Foul is called – switch to Regular Foul Signal (use the same hand)
3. The ball goes into basket – Successful 3 Point Signal



2.8 SIGNALS & REPORTING

Target: To identify the different phases and techniques of having strong and decisive signals as part of court presence.

Referees should use only the official signals defined in the FIBA Basketball Rules. It is a professional sign and attitude to use only the official signals. Personal habits and preferences only demonstrate a lack of understanding and professional attitude.

When communicating decisions with signals it is good to remember that the use of signals creates a strong perception among the people who are watching the referees. It is one piece in the overall package of providing a trusted and accepted refereeing image. Often we think that there is no need to practise the official signals at all, but it is highly necessary.

A checklist for successful use of the signals:

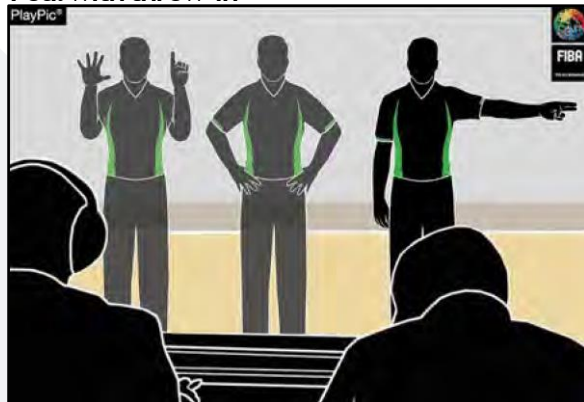
1. Use official and authorized FIBA signals
2. Rhythm
 - a. Each signal has a start and a stop
 - b. When finishing the signal, freeze it and count “one-two” in your mind
3. Strong, Sharp, Visible and Decisive signals (practice this in front of the mirror)
4. Use both hands for direction, depending which shoulder is in the front.
5. Treat each team, player and play with the same standard (no histrionics)
6. Remember less is more (no repetition, one clear and strong signal)
7. Verbally support the signal at all times.

1. REPORTING

A checklist for successful reporting to the scorers' table:

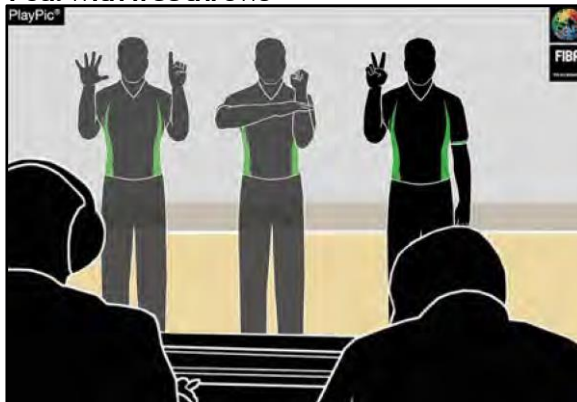
1. Walk sharply to a spot where you have visual contact with the table. Minimize distance – think where is your next position after reporting.
2. Stop, both feet side by side on the floor and breathe (body balance – shoulders level)
3. Rhythm (start - stop - "one - two" / start - stop - "one - two" / start - stop - "one - two")
4. Identify: Number, nature of foul and penalty (throw-in or free throws)
5. Nature of the foul must be the same as what really happened in the play
6. Verbally support the reporting to the scorer's table.

Foul with throw-in



1. Number – No. 6
2. Nature of foul – Blocking foul
3. Penalty – Throw-in direction

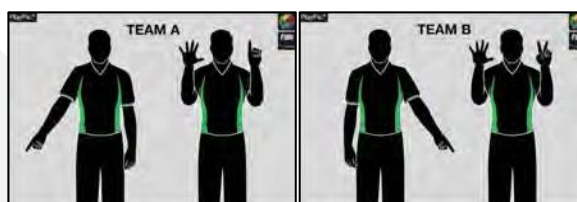
Foul with free throws



1. Number – No. 6
2. Nature of foul – Illegal contact to hand
3. Penalty – 2 free throws

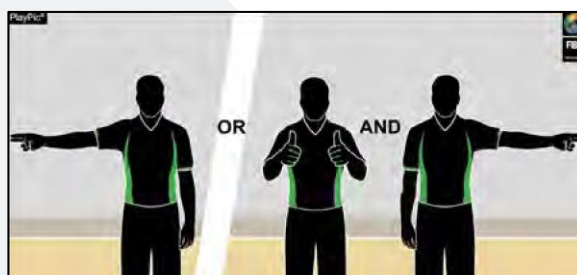
Double Foul

1. Point to team A's bench and report the number
2. Point to team B's bench and report the number
3. Show how the game will continue
 - 3a. throw-in direction OR
 - 3b. jump ball situation & throw-in direction



1.

2.



3a.

3b.