

the East have shown the so-called illegal offensive moves while the defense is committing what are almost unpardonable sins in the West

All of us have a tendency to be provincial and to claim that our viewpoints are right. Because of more intensive discussion of interpretation, administrative problems will be solved just as legislative and technical problems have been clarified. Priority of position can be noted as well for the offense as it is for the defense. There is as much illegal blocking by the defense as is manipulated by the offense. One of the absurd interpretations tolerated by some Easterners was demonstrated in the Olympic Finals at Madison Square Garden. A player tied up an opponent by putting both arms around him from the rear to grab the ball. The official simply called this act a held ball. Such an interpretation, with other arbitrary re-writing of rules, is bound to cause misunderstanding among the majority of teams which try to follow the limitations made by the Rules Committee in the Guide.

Basketball coaches, like all humans, desire victory. Some are more aggressive than others. It is sad to see a lot of hard work nullified by some thoughtless or careless official. Just when, where and how persistently should one protest to an official is a coaching problem. Many old axioms as "the creakiest wheel gets the most grease", and others, are in the minds of some coaches. Nobody doubts that in a high percentage of cases the coach does gain some advantage in decisions by being a chronic beggar, but the price is too high. The trait is psychologically regressive and leads backward rather than forward. It is the same urge which makes a child stamp his feet and scream when refused a piece of candy. It has a carry-over into the more important things of life. A fellow would be accused of lack of courage if he would not kick when short-changed a dime, but when he talks with an official after winning a game he is considered as patronizing, or if after he loses he is listed as a crab. So many games are decided by a toot of the whistle that it is one of the most important administrative problems. Yet there is little or no sane checking between coaches and officials.

Everyone admits that a basketball official has a most difficult job. Much of this difficulty is brought on by the officials themselves. Some fail to keep abreast of code changes. One well-meaning group still call accidental kicking of the ball by an offensive player; others are a year behind on the dribble-fumble change; and some still are floundering with the mid-court line. Inability to be consistent is a human fault which all of us have to a greater or less extent, but some officials show extremely wide variations in their meeting of certain situations, and bring condemnation on themselves. On different nights or at different times in the same game officials vary in their held ball decisions all the way from tagging the ball to a complete wrestling match. Again, when a shooter crashes into a guard on the follow-up what appears to be an identical situation may be called three different ways.

In addition to rule laxity and wide variation some officials bring more grief on themselves in attempts to stage a one-man show while attempting to add "color" to their work. Most players and coaches feel that a basketball game should be a contest between two teams with the officials as a controlling influences which should be as inconspicuous as possible. Pseudo dramatics, goal shooting and other referee demonstrations distract spectator attention. It is an axiom in all athletics that the player who "grandstands" thinks so much of his individual performance that his team value is questionable. Obviously the dramatic official is thinking of his own show more than efficient work in handling the play. By attracting undue importance to himself such an official multiplies greatly the effect of any error he makes. The good official does not care to be the salient feature, but prefers to be in the background and see that the team which plays the best game becomes the winner. There are too few of this type and their scarcity leads to the conclusion that officiating has not kept pace with other developments of the game.