



Basketball Bench Conduct, Sportsmanship, and the Coaching Box

Each basketball season, the IHSAA office receives many questions on acceptable bench conduct by head basketball coaches. The question stems from what is interpreted as acceptable behavior. This document is intended to offer coaches and officials some insight and guidance.

Coaching Box: Illinois has adopted the use of a 14' coaching box for its member schools. The coaching box can only be utilized by the head coach of a particular team. Failure to comply with the rule results in a distinct advantage that is not within the spirit and intent of the rules. NFHS Rule 10-5 is clear and concise. The head coach of a particular team or any other bench personnel may not be outside the prescribed coaching box except when otherwise permitted by rule. When a coach is out of the coaching box during play, he/she should be assessed a technical foul.

Coaches may respond spontaneously to plays during a contest. However, these reactions should not be prolonged, profane, vulgar, or threatening. If they are, officials should penalize coaches with a technical foul, whether or not the coach was in or out of the coaching box when responding spontaneously. **More egregious conduct, whether occurring in or out of the coaching box, should be properly and consistently penalized with a technical foul without warning.**

Examples of egregious conduct violations which should be penalized when they occur include, but are not limited to:

1. Comments directed at or referring to any game official that question the integrity of an official. (Repeated references to the foul count against each team; suggesting an official is "cheating" or "homer" a team, etc.)
2. A negative response to a call/no-call including, but not limited to, approaching/charging an official in a hostile, aggressive, or otherwise threatening manner, emphatically removing one's coat in a response to call/no-call or throwing equipment or clothing, thrashing arms in disgust, running or jumping in disbelief, or other actions deemed to incite undesirable crowd reactions.

Regardless of the situation, it is in everyone's best interest for coaches and officials to work together to bring about the best possible event for our student-athletes. One key way to achieve this:

Coaches: wait until an official makes his way toward you in the normal course of the game or during dead ball periods to make your point in a civil manner in close proximity.

Officials: when you know or suspect that a coach wants to speak to you, make your way towards the coach so that he/she can make his/her point in a timely and less boisterous manner.

Cooperation from both parties in this manner will result in greater understanding and a better atmosphere for all. Coaches and officials have an obligation to one another, players, and fans to set a positive example for everyone and conduct themselves in a civil, respectful manner.



Coaches who respond spontaneously to play during a contest; Verbal warning should be provided to players or coaches when the offense is judged not to be major. The warning is one of the tools used to help improve behavior before a technical foul must be given. However, these reactions should not be prolonged, profane, vulgar, or threatening. If they are, officials should penalize coaches with a technical foul. More egregious conduct should be properly and consistently penalized with a technical foul without warning.

Examples of egregious conduct violations which should be penalized when they occur include, but are not limited to:

- *Comments directed or referring to any game official that question the integrity of an official. (ex. repeated references to the foul count against each team, etc.)*
- *A negative response to a call/no call including, but not limited to approaching/charging an official in a hostile, aggressive, or otherwise threatening manner, thrashing arms in disgust, or other actions deemed to incite undesirable crowd reactions.*

Regardless of the situation, it is in everyone's best interest for coaches and officials to work together to bring out the best possible event for our student-athletes. Some way for both parties to work together include:

- *Coaches: wait until the official makes his/her way towards you in the normal course of the game or during dead ball periods to make your point/clarification in a civil manner in proximity.*
- *Officials: when you know or suspect that a coach wants to speak to you, be aware of the situation to have a timely and less boisterous manner.*