

Clock Adjustments Addressed to Support Officials in 2026-27 High School Basketball Rules Changes

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Guidelines to help game officials manage the game clock at the end of each quarter and other timing errors are among the major rules changes in high school basketball for the 2026-27 season.

The two additions addressing the game clock in Rule 5 (5-9-5 and 5-10-2 Note) were among the five rules changes recommended by the NFHS Basketball Rules Committee at its April 27-29 meeting in Indianapolis. All rules changes were reviewed by the NFHS Rules Review Committee and approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

In the last 59.9 seconds of each quarter and overtime periods, a minimum of three-tenths (0.3) of a second must expire from the game clock when the ball is legally touched by a player inbounds after a throw-in. This addition of Rule 5-9-5 is consistent with the tap-in rule in Rule 5-2-5, however, does not apply if the game clock does not display tenths of a second.

Rule 5-10-2 Note was added to allow officials to utilize a silent count in the event of a clock malfunction. If an official determines the clock was not started or stopped properly, a silent count may be used as definitive knowledge to correct the timing error.

“These changes provide officials with clearer guidance and help provide greater consistency in administering end-of-quarter timing situations, while also ensuring there are practical solutions available when timing errors or clock malfunctions occur,” said Monica Maxwell, NFHS director of sports and liaison to the Basketball Rules Committee.

Rule 8-6-4 was added to establish a single dead-ball period at approximately the same time when assessing if technical fouls committed by opposing teams cancel. Specifically, in this instance, all technical fouls are considered to be committed at approximately the same time for the purposes of offsetting their penalties and play would resume at the point of interruption.

Rule 9-2 Penalty clarified that when an infraction occurs on a throw-in, the location of the violation is the original throw-in spot. If the original throw-in spot is not a designated spot, the ensuing throw-in is moved to such a spot.

Lastly, Rule 6-4-4g was removed. With changes last year that modified the procedures when addressing faking being fouled, it was no longer applicable.

A complete listing of the basketball rules changes will be available on the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org. Click on “Sports” at the top of the home page and select “Basketball” and then “Rules.” The print version of the 2026-27 Basketball Rules Book will be available for purchase in late July at www.NFHS.com, and the digital version will be available in July via NFHS Digital at www.NFHS.org.

According to the 2024-25 NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, basketball is the third-most popular sport for boys with 540,704 participants in 18,690 schools nationwide. For

girls, it ranks fourth with 356,240 participants in 18,208 schools.