

Basketball Bench Conduct and Sportsmanship

Each Basketball season the KSHSAA office receives many questions on acceptable bench conduct by Head Basketball Coaches. The question stems from what is interpreted as acceptable behavior. This material is intended to offer some insight and guidance.

Officials should permit certain behavior by the head coach who engages in spontaneous reactions to officiating calls and non-calls provided the coach remains in the coaching box and the reaction is not prolonged, profane, vulgar, or threatening.

Coaches and bench personnel are expected to adhere to the specific rules set forth in NFHS Rule 10. Repeated or prolonged violations of these rules should result in a technical foul being assessed against the coach or other bench personnel. **More egregious conduct violations, while inside or outside the coaching box, should be properly and consistently penalized with a technical foul without warning.**

Examples of egregious conduct violations which should be penalized include, but are not limited to, the following:

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 a call/no-call or throwing equipment or clothing. Thrashing the arms in disgust, running or jumping in disbelief, or other actions deemed to incite undesirable crowd reactions.

Coaching Box: Make sure there is a designated coaching box as prescribed in the NFHS rules book. Failure to comply with the rule results in a distinct advantage that is not within the spirit and intent of the rules. The rule is clear and concise. The head coach 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 instructing their players, officials must remind the coach to return to the coaching box. This can be done with a couple of sentences in a **relaxed tone** and the coaching box issue has been addressed. This is preventive officiating and can go a long way toward avoiding further problems.

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 the coach wants to speak to you, make your way towards the coach so that they can make their 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.

Supported by the Kansas Basketball Coaches Association and KSHSAA