

# SPORTS

## Applies to both boys and girls —

# High school basketball adds free throw/foul rule

**By Mike Monahan**  
 BLOOMINGTON — The National Federation of High Schools made what is arguably the biggest change in high school boys and girls basketball since the three-point line was added in 1985-86.

The new rule will start this season (2023-24) and will be followed by the Illinois High School Association.

The first rule is in team fouls. The most recent rule was when a team got to its seventh foul (per half) they shot one-and-one free throws (unless they were fouled in shooting action for which they would get two free throws) until the team reached its 10th team foul and then it was two shots. The NFHS voted to have each quarter instead of each half, reset to 0 team fouls. Not only that but they did away with the bonus all together.

“Overall, it is like anything new,” said Arcola boys basketball coach Greg Gisinger. “It is going to take some getting used to. My number one rule change that I sent into the IHSA was to reset the fouls in each quarter like the women’s college game does. I don’t see their reasoning of safety with free throw situations due to physicality and things like that. I don’t see a lot of that, but I do like the idea of the rule and it might make for a smoother game hopefully. Hopefully that (rule on free throws) will clean it up a little bit.

Coaches can adjust to what we have to do.”

The change to rule 4-8-1 eliminates the one-and-one scenario and sets new foul limits each quarter for awarding the bonus free throw. The NFHS approved the rule changes by the basketball rules committee at its annual meeting April 24-26 in Indianapolis. The recommendations were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

“The rules committee studied data that has shown that higher injury rates on rebounding situations and saw this as an opportunity to reduce opportunities for rough play during rebounds,” said Lindsey Atkinson, NFHS Director of Sports and liaison to the Basketball Rules Committee. “Additionally, resetting the fouls each quarter will improve game flow and allow teams to adjust their play by not carrying foul totals to quarters two and four.”

Gisinger said, “I agree with the rule, but I don’t agree with their reasoning for it. I am okay with that though. In my 18 years of coaching I don’t remember the physicality of the free throw lane-getting a rebound-being a safety issue knock on wood. I have never had a kid get hurt in a free throw situation.”

Peoria Journal Star’s Dave Eminian had this comment from IHSA Executive Director Craig Anderson,



“Part of it is injuries caused while competing for rebounds on missed one-and-ones, according to their research (NFHS’s). It is a safety-driven thing, and we support it. The IHSA will follow that rule.”

Most states are following the rule, including Indiana.

The NFHS says the new rules should reduce rough play and improve game flow and could create an adjustment in the way some teams play.

“I think there will be times this season when we are in a close game and I wish we had the one-and-one,” said Gisinger. “When you are behind and they miss the first one and you are like, ‘oh,

good, ‘but now they will get another one. There might be times where it benefits us. It could be that it is their sixth foul (last year) and we would be shooting a one-and-bonus and miss the first and then we would have to go back on defense. Now, we get a second shot at a second free throw. I think there will be times we are cursing the rule and at times we will be ‘thank God that rule is in place because it may have saved our bacon tonight’”

Personally, I do not like any part of the rule. Yes, I am a traditionalist also, but what I remember from my basketball practices is the importance of making the front end of a one-and-one

which of course allows you another free throw. Now, you could be tied and and let’s say the opposing team fouls you, but not in the act of shooting. The shooter missed the first, but now he is not penalized for missing as he gets another free throw and makes it for the win. There are many other things in the final seconds that will not result in one-and-one and yes, you want to make both free throws, but now you can be a 50 percent shooter in the game from the free throw line and win. Or you could be down one and so you have to foul and the opposing players misses the first and makes the second. So, instead of a chance to get the ball after the missed free throw the shooter gets another free throw.

I just think they should leave the rules the way they were. As you may have heard the shot clock has been discussed and has been okayed for regular season tournaments. I truly hope they do not ever adopt the shot clock!

Gisinger said he sees both sides of the rule.

“My biggest issue is something that happens in the college men’s game more, but does happen in high school and that is when teams get in the bonus so early, like the middle of the first quarter and after that they are shooting free throw after free throw after free throw. This gives you a chance to reset (team fouls). As a coach you

can make adjustments defensively and not get penalized the whole half because maybe the officials are calling it real tight and you have to make the adjustment to defend and not get penalized the whole half for it. You can get penalized maybe just a quarter of it. Adjust as a coach and maybe it will be a gamechanger in the game. You are not just shooting free throws all night.”

Gisinger and his coaching staff have talked about the new rule. “One thing we might do is foul at the end of the first, second, third or fourth quarters, especially if it is the fourth in a close game,” said Gisinger. “If we have only fouled three times with a minute and a half left and we have someone who is good on defense and who we don’t worry about being in foul trouble, we could foul him to get the last possession possibly. I don’t know if all coaches will do that, but we will do it. It may help us win a close game. It may come back to bite us early. Like anything they may do it for a couple of years and hate it and I will be emailing the IHSA to say get rid of it. The rules that eventually were changed had been discussed in a lot of coaching meetings. The rule is what it is and something different. We will see how it goes.”

**Next week: Reaction from Arcola girls coach Corey Roberts and other coaches**

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