

New rule puzzles coaches

Changes to rules affects 1-and-1 free throws, resetting foul counts
BY STEVE CRAIG Portland Press Herald

High school basketball players will no longer feel the pressure of having to make the front end of a 1-and-1 free throw situation. And coaches in Maine aren't sure what to make of the new national rule.

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) announced this week that, starting next season, 1-and-1 free throws will be eliminated and team fouls will reset for each quarter.

For decades, the seventh, eighth and ninth fouls in a half sent boys and girls to the free throw line for a 1-and-1 situation, meaning players had to make the first free throw to attempt the second. After the 10th foul of a half, all fouls resulted in two free throws.

Starting next year, the fifth foul in each quarter will result in two free throws.

Fouling late in a game to force players to convert the 1-and-1 has been a staple strategy in high school and college basketball.

"I thought the 1-and-1 put in a little added pressure in the moment on the shooter, and that could sometimes be used strategically," said Jason Pellerin, the boys' coach at Lawrence High in Fairfield.

Bill Goodman, coach of the Cheverus girls, said he doesn't mind the rule changes but wonders why they were even made.

"There was no one clamoring for this rule change," said Goodman, 54.

"I've followed basketball, played it, or coached it my whole life and I've never said, 'Geez, they have to change that rule.'"

According to NFHS Director of Sports Lindsey Atkinson, eliminating the 1-and-1 was in part driven by data that showed a higher incidence of injury during rebounding situations.

"You're not going to stop fouling and you're still going to have the chance to miss the second foul shot, so you're still going to have rebounding," said Dave Halligan, Falmouth's boys' coach. Halligan has won 581 games and six state titles in 36 seasons as a high school basketball coach.

Halligan said he expects the rule change will actually increase hard, aggressive fouls "because now you get five in a quarter."

The new rules align with women's college basketball, which adopted quarters instead of halves in 2015. Men's college basketball, which has 20-minute halves, uses the 1-and-1 after the seventh foul of a half, and the 10th foul results in two free throws.

Lynne Hasson, who coaches the South Portland girls, said she likes the changes, in part because she got used to seeing them while watching her daughter Maddie Hasson, the 2020 NCAA Division III Player of the Year, at Bowdoin College.

"Two shots instead of the 1-and-1, I like the idea," Lynne Hasson said. "I really do think it will force teams to play better defense. You don't want to put the opponent on the line for two shots early in the quarter."

Kevin Millington, who coaches the South Portland boys, predicted the rule changes will make it tougher for teams to come from behind.

"When you've got two free throws, even making one can push the lead a little bit, so I think teams that are winning will be more likely to win," said Millington, who has coached the Red Riots to consecutive Class AA titles.

With fouls resetting to zero at each quarter, Millington said he anticipates situations where teams that have to foul late in a

game to stop the clock and hope for a missed free throw now will have “a lot more fouls to give. And then, of course, I worry about referees in Maine who like to call intentional fouls in that situation, so are we going to see more intentional (fouls)? I hope not.”

Mike Burnham, executive director of the Maine Principals’ Association, confirmed that Maine will follow the NFHS rules.

Personnel and style of play will be factors in how much the rule changes impact a team, said John Morgan, coach of the Noble boys. Some may feel playing more zone to avoid fouling is the best approach. Others may go to full-court pressure, knowing team fouls won’t carry over to the next quarter.

“You could go out and say we’ve got four clean (fouls) to be aggressive. And if you’re a high scoring team, maybe you don’t even care if they go to the line early in a game,” Morgan said.

The foul-reset rule means teams can commit up to eight fouls in a half – four in each quarter – before forfeiting free throws, compared to six fouls with the previous rule.

“You can actually foul more and get rewarded to a point that way,” said John Baehr, who coaches the Winthrop girls.

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