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## An Analysis of Certain Controversial Plays in Basketball

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AN ANALYSIS OF CERTAIN CONTROVERSIAL  
PLAYS IN BASKETBALL

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BURTON

1954

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AN ANALYSIS OF CERTAIN CONTROVERSIAL PLAYS  
IN BASKETBALL

by

George Washington Burton III

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science

in the

Graduate Division

of

Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical College  
Prairie View, Texas

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

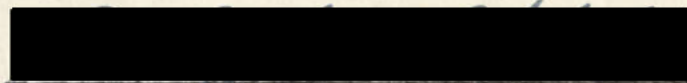
The writer wishes to acknowledge the invaluable assistance of Mr. William M. Batts, Principal of the Ralph J. Bunche High School, Crockett, Texas.

Dr. John C. Mitchem supplied the untiring inspiration for the undertaking of this project. His patience and guidance have been most invaluable.

To the fine fellows, who cooperated wholeheartedly as subjects for the film, the writer is deeply indebted.

G. W. B.

APPROVED:

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*[Handwritten signature]*

## DEDICATION

To my Dad who has encouraged me and served as a source of inspiration for many years; also, to four nephews who I hope will become great athletes and acquire ethics and good sportsmanship through sports.

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## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

Basketball like many other competitive sports has undergone considerable changes. Through the addition and modification of its rules, the game has advanced to a point that today it is considered by many to be America's most complex and fastest-growing game.

Due to great speed of the play and the rapid change from offense to defense, officiating has become a very difficult problem. In many cases spectators, coaches, and in some cases even the players become incensed at officials' decisions of some type or another. In the last few years there have been many incidents caused by controversies resulting from difficult play situations. These controversies in many cases are outgrowths of either misinterpretation, or in some cases, actual ignorance of the rule or rules involved. Because of the importance of sportmanship and fair play both to the spectator and player of basketball, some effort must be given to aid in seeing that these attributes are developed to the greatest extent possible.

It was thought that a better understanding of the rules and play situation that cause controversies might in some way help to foster better sportmanship and attitude



toward officials.

Statement of the Problem

1. To select the play situations that cause the most difficulty during the season.
2. To exhibit those difficult officiating situations by moving pictures and to show exactly the nature of the foul committed.
3. Using the above data, attempt to create a film which might be used to further better sportmanship and understanding of basketball on the part of players, coaches, and spectators.

## Chapter II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

What the administrator can do to the status of athletics as is stated by the Educational Policy Committee:

"School superintendents and principals have responsibility for the conduct of good athletic programs and for building understanding and support for such programs among all members of the school staff, students, and the general public. The tendency of some administrators to keep "hands off" the athletic activities of their schools sometimes amounts to neglect of professional duty.

The mounting evidence of parental concern about school athletics is a healthy sign. It is believed that this report should be of help to parents in evaluating the local school athletic program.

The results of such an inquiry might serve as a basis for discussion in a meeting of parents and teachers with attention focused on inlays and means of culminating bad policies and providing better ones.

The tendency of interscholastic athletics to imitate intercollegiate athletics results as in part from coaches who impose the college pattern in secondary schools. To a great extent the imitation is a response to the demands of the public, including sometimes the board of education members as well as sports writers. A spectacle loving, victory demanding public tends to take the college program as the norm and to applaud and to support the school program as it more nearly fits the college pattern."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Educational Policies Commission, School Athletics Problems and Policies, (1201 Sixteenth Street, Northwest, Washington, D. C. 1954) pp. 76-78

Heber Newsom states: If the players, coaches and spectators really understood the rules concerning body contact, the game would improve for all parties involved, including officials.

The rules committee set forth the principle that a player may take any position on the court if he does not cause personal contact.<sup>1</sup>

If the adults place great emphasis on winning, children will do the same, with the result that victory becomes so grim an objective that defeat may bring emotional upset. The coach has an obligation both to his team and to the public, that is, he as a leader should demonstrate and inculcate the proper attitude with respect to winning or losing. Sometimes an outcry will be raised in one section because an official misses a call. This official should be considered your guest and that particular spectator should be banned from the vicinity of the playing field or area.

As has been stated by many persons, "The way the coach goes so goes the players and spectators". The players and the spectators are educated, as far as sportsmanship and fairplay is concerned, by action mostly on the part of the

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<sup>1</sup>  
Heber Newsom, Basketball for the High School Coach and Physical Education Teacher, (W. C. Brown Co.) p. 118

coach.

It has been thought that spectators make more of an issue of basketball sportsmanship because of lack of knowledge of the game as far as the rules are concerned. The spectator and the student body sees only the points made and not how they are made.

The attitude and concepts of basketball are far different from those of former years; this has been caused by the rapid changes and interest in the game. To keep up with the game many coaches use unethical tactics and forget all rules and ethics for coaches or athletics.

W. L. Sutton says: Competitive athletics present a good laboratory for developing sportsmanship. Coaches are usually responsible for good or bad sportsmanship in the school. Student bodies are quick to sense bad feelings between rival coaches and rival teams. How to win and how to lose without losing friends is a real test of sportsmanship.<sup>1</sup>

Heber Newsom states: Of course, you will teach the boys to win, but you must teach them to play according to the rules of the game, of ethics, and of good sportsmanship. As a general rule the attitude and behavior of players toward

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<sup>1</sup> W. L. Sutton, Fundamental Basketball Drills for the Coach in a Small High School, (Unpublished Masters Thesis, Prairie View A. & M. College, May 1954) p. 26

the opponents, officials and spectators merely reflect the stand and conduct of the coach. It is entirely beneath the dignity of a coach in his attitude of righteous indignation to "blow his top" and make a scene because of some miscue of the officials.<sup>1</sup>

As stated by Bible:

The duty of a coach, it seems to me, is to make the will and the way to win a part of the current ideal of every student. In order to do this the coach must drive himself and his team; there must be no affection about not craving victory. He must seek to make the games thrilling exhibitions of skill, cleverness, daring, and finished technique, but in all his ambition to win he must never forget that victory is a means and not an end, that fundamentally his duty is to make sound, clean, decent decisions.<sup>2</sup>

Such authorities as these help us to get a better insight and help us to educate persons who observe our game or activities critically.

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<sup>1</sup>  
Heber Newsom, Basketball for the High School Coach and Physical Education Teacher, (W. C. Brown Co.) p. 2

<sup>2</sup>  
Dana X. Bible, Basketball Methods, (The MacMillian Co., 1939) p. 53

## Chapter III

### PROCEDURE

The purpose of this study was to determine which basketball rules or play situations caused the most difficulty during the past year. Questionnaires were given to fifty summer school students who were actively employed in coaching and officiating during the academic school year to determine which rules or play situations they felt caused the most trouble.\* On the basis of the answers to these questionnaires, ten play situations were selected for analysis. The following play situations and rules were analyzed and interpreted by moving pictures.

Through the analysis of these play situations the writer attempted to construct a moving picture that could be used to aid in the development of better sportsmanship relative to the game of basketball.

\* A copy of the questionnaire is in the appendix.

## Chapter IV

### RULES OR PLAY SITUATIONS

The rules or play situations selected for the study were used as a scenario for the moving picture.

#### Rule I:

A pivot takes place when a player who is holding the ball steps one or more than once in any direction with the same foot, the other foot called the pivot foot being kept in contact with the floor.

Situation I - On a shot for basket the pivot foot slides on the floor during the shot while the other foot has been raised and is back on the floor.

Medium close up shot. Camera on level with action that is taking place.

Situation II - In passing a ball to another player the passer uses a boxer shuffle before letting the ball go.

Medium close up shot. Camera on level with action that is taking place.

#### Rule II:

A player who receives the ball while he is progressing or completing a dribble may use a two count rhythm in coming to a stop or in getting rid of the ball.

Situation I - Catch the ball in the air, if the left foot is in contact with the floor the right foot may come down

to the floor and become the pivot foot. This is where the one two rhythm count comes in. This can be worked with either foot coming to rest on the floor before the other. In this situation the player in black is the offender, player in white has passed but ball is intercepted. This too is to be done in slow motion and close up.

Camera should be at a side angle and at medium distance from scene.

### Rule III.

Touch the ball after it has started its downward flight during an opponents throw for field goal and while the entire ball is above the level of the basket ring.

Situation I - Player in black on Team A shoots, player in white on Team B's pivot man knocks ball away. This is to be shot at an angle where the ball can be seen best on its downward flight with the offender facing the camera. Camera should be at a level with the action.

### Rule IV:

A dribbler shall not charge into nor contact an opponent in his path nor attempt to dribble between two opponents or between an opponent and a boundary line unless the space is such to provide a reasonable chance for him to go through without contact.

Situation I - On the dribble the dribbler tries to pass between two opponents who are in white, the offender is in black. Team A is in white and Team B is in black. On the attempt to pass through contact is made. This is to be in



slow motion so as to see whether player B had time enough to pass before player A slid into his path.

Medium distance from camera and in front of action.

Rule V:

A player who screens and who makes little effort to play the ball has the greater responsibility if contact occurs and if he takes a position so near an opponent that pushing occurs or a charging occurs when normal movements are made by him, or so quickly in a moving opponents path that pushing or charging cannot be avoided.

Situation I - Player A is in white and player B is in black. This has to do with a player who tries to slide in position to screen with out the ball and whose back is away from his goal this has ceased to be a screen but a block - it works best on a shot and not a pass.

Close up shot so that screen can be clearly seen, camera at eye level.

Rule VI:

Contact which is entirely incidental to an effort by opponents to reach a loose ball or accidental contact which may result when opponents are in equal favorable positions to perform normal defensive or offensive movements should not be considered illegal.

Situation I - Player A has on the white while player B has on the black. Both men are attempting to secure

the ball. Contact is made, this is not necessarily a foul so no foul should be called not even a double foul.

Medium close-up in front of play with camera at eye level.

Rule VII:

Taking a position so close to a stationary opponent that contact ensues when the opponent makes normal body movements.

Situation I - Player B who is in black takes a position so close to A who is in white, when A makes a move that is normal and contact is made the foul is on player B who is in black.

This should be from a side angle medium close up on eye level.

Rule VIII.

Trying to reach the ball from a position from the rear or side of a opponent who is in control.

Situation I - Player B who is in black reaches around player A or over player A who is in white, body contact occurs and the foul is on player B who is in black.

This should be from a side front angle at medium distance on eye level.

Rule IX:

Attempting to reach the ball when it is free but when an opponent is near the ball or in a better position with respect to it.

Situation I - Player A in white is in better position to reach ball player B who is in black makes an attempt to steal ball, contact is made foul is on player B who was not in position.

Medium close up in front of action on level with play which is very low.

Rule X:

A screener becomes a block if the screener charges into an opponent; on the other hand, if the screener operates legally, the opponent has no right to push or charge the screener.

Situation I - Player A, who is white, makes a legal screen. Player B charges into him, the foul is on B who pushed into A.

This film is done in slow motion. Medium close up action above action and in front of action.

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Educational Policies Commission, School Athletics Problems and Policies, 1201 Sixteenth Street, Northwest, Washington, D. C., 1954, pp. 76 - 78

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Sutton, W. L., Fundamental Basketball Drills for the Coach in a Small High School, Unpublished Masters Thesis, Prairie View A. & M. College, Prairie View, Texas, May 1954, p. 26

Bible, Dana X., Basketball Methods, The MacMillian Co., 1939, p. 53

## APPENDIX

A study of current practices and attitudes of basketball coaches in regard to violations in basketball rule interpretation.

### Questionnaire

Directions: To be filled in by basketball coaches who have has such type fouls as these called. Check one of these. Check as to the difficulty you have experienced with rule or play situation during the past year.

little      No  
trouble trouble trouble

1. When officials make different decisions.

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2. The timers shall note when each half is to start and shall notify the referee so that he may notify each team.

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3. Each player shall be numbered on the front and back of his shirt with plain numbers of solid color contrasting with the color of the shirt.

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4. A ball which is not in contact with a player on the court retains the same status as when it was last in contact with a player or the court.

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\*5. A pivot takes place when a player who is holding the ball steps once or more than once in any direction with the same foot, the other foot called the pivot foot being kept in contact with the floor.

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\*6. A player who receives the ball while he is progressing or upon completion of a dribble may use a two count rhythm in coming to a stop or in getting rid of the ball.

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7. For any jump ball each jumper shall have both feet on or inside there half of the jumping circle.

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little No  
trouble trouble trouble

8. The throw-in starts when the ball is at the disposal of a player entitled to the throw-in and he shall pass it so it touches another player in the court within 5 seconds from the time throw-in starts.
- 
- \*9. Touch the ball after it has started its downward flight during an opponents throw for field goal and while the entire ball is above the level of the basket ring.
- 
10. Failing to raise his hand at arms length above his head after being charged with a personal foul or raising it in such a way as to indicate resentment.
- 
- \*11. A dribbler shall not charge into nor contact an opponent in his path nor attempt to dribble between two opponents or between an opponent and a boundary, unless the space is such to provide a reasonable chance for him to go through with out contact.
- 
- \*12. A player who screens and who makes little effort to play the ball has the greater responsibility if contact occurs and if he takes a position so near an opponent that pushing or charging occurs when normal movements are made by him, or so quickly in a moving opponents path that pushing or charging cannot be avoided.
- 
- \*13. Contact which is entirely incidental to an effort by opponents to reach a loose ball or accidental contact which may result when opponents are in equally favorable positions to perform normal defensive or offensive movements should not be considered illegal.
-

little No  
trouble trouble trouble

- \*14. Taking a position so close to a stationary opponent that contact ensues when the opponent makes normal bodily movements.
- 
- \*15. Trying to reach the ball from a position from the rear or side of an opponent who is in control.
- 
- \*16. Attempting to reach the ball when it is free but when an opponent is near the ball or in a better position with respect to it.
- 
- \*17. A screen becomes a block if the screener charges into an opponent; on the other hand, if the screener operates legally, the opponent has no right to push or charge the screener.
- 
18. See a player about to charge into, or hold an opponent who has the ball and the whistle is blown to prevent the foul declaring held ball.
- 
19. If a ball holder who is near a boundary is forced out of bounds by negligible contact, ball awarded to this player.
- 
20. Remain for more than 3 seconds in that part of his free throw lane between the end line and the farther edge of the free throw line while the ball is in control of his team.
- 
21. The backboard shall be 4 feet from the end line.
- 
22. Multiple foul is a situation in which two or more teammates commit fouls against the same opponent at approximately the same time.
- 

\* Rules selected to be portrayed in the moving picture.



HANDBOOK FOR  
"A MOVIE ANALYSIS OF CERTAIN CONTROVERSIAL  
PLAYS IN BASKETBALL"

by

George W. Burton

## A MOVIE ANALYSIS OF CERTAIN CONTROVERSIAL PLAYS IN BASKETBALL

Basketball today is America's fastest growing game. Because of the number of games played during a season in many cases it draws larger crowds than all sports. Because of the rapid style that it is played the game is not decided until the final whistle has blown. Many games that have appeared to be lop-sided victories, even as late as the fourth quarter, have turned out to be victories for the other team by small margins.

The present rules of basketball allow an official power that can actually determine the victor of the game. In many games a violation in the last few seconds of play can be the deciding factor as to the winner. Because the nature of many of the violations is not fully understood by spectators, coaches and players many near riot situations have occurred. In recent years basketball seasons have been marked by incidents resulting from these misunderstandings. There have been many cases in which the officials had to have police protection following the completion of the game. Cases in which fans and coaches have resorted to unsportsmanship-like conduct against officials. Much of this has been misunderstanding of a few violations, namely, offensive violations.

It is extremely difficult for spectators and the lay public to understand how his team could possibly have made a violation while on the offensive.

It is the purpose of this moving picture to analyze certain controversial play situations in the hope of creating better understanding and sportsmanship concerning the game of basketball.

## SCENE I

Consists of warm up drills that are used before practice scrimmage and before games. These drills provide warm up using actual game situation skills.

## SCENE II

Charging Foul

The player in black cannot dribble between two players or between a player and a boundary line. If contact is made the foul is committed by player in black. This violation causes a great deal of controversy because most spectators cannot understand how an offensive player can commit a violation. In many cases officials favoring home teams call blocking on the defensive player.

## SCENE III

The player in black who is guarding the pivot man is too close for player in white to have normal movement without contact. A player should be allowed enough space to move about under normal body conditions.

## SCENE IV

Screening is no longer screening but blocking when the screener moves with the player to be screened. The first screen an illegal screen, the second is legal. This play situation causes a great deal of difficulty for coaches and spectators. In many cases it is hard to determine if the

screeener moved or not. If the screener did not move the violation is on the defensive player. The situation of the screener moving is the one generally not understood.

#### SCENE V

When two players in favorable position try to get to a free ball, and contact is made, there is no violation. This could not be construed, either, as a double foul. A good official will call a jump ball.

#### SCENE VI

The ball while on its downward flight in the imaginary cylinder above the basket cannot be touched. No parts of the basket or rim can be touched by defensive player if it is apparent that the shot will be made. In some instances balls that are not potential field goals are ruled good if a player touches the ball on its downward flight.

#### SCENE VII

Pivot man moves pivot foot before passing ball or shooting ball. This is difficult for an official to see and is another offensive violation spectators do not understand fully.

#### SCENE VIII

The correct method for pivot man to move feet after the ball has been released - jumping on the shot.

## SCENE IX

This scene shows how a player can receive a ball and pass or shoot a ball using the required rhythm count.

## SCENE X

Shows how the player can dribble and pass or shoot the ball using the required rhythm count.

## SCENE XI

This scene shows tripping instead of guarding. The player in black fakes a charge violation from player in white. In many cases the spectators see only the player faking the charging violation.