

Dead Ball Efficiency

Introduction

When the clock is not running this is “Dead Ball” time. An aspect of basketball officiating that seldom receives the attention it deserves is what officials should do during dead ball periods including time outs.

The highly successful officials have the ability to effectively handle dead ball situations. Getting the ball back in play without undo haste, causing errors, or wasting time.

Consider the following points that could improve your officiating and effectiveness.

Center of Attention

When the ball is live (especially when the clock is running), players, coaches, and fans have plenty of things to keep them busy.

When the ball is DEAD everything stops for a brief period of time. The officials become the center of attention. How well officials handle this attention could spell the difference between perception, game control and potential chaos.

Short Dead Ball Periods

A short dead ball period will usually results from a foul, a violation, or a held ball. In each of these instances the calling official will have some communication to make in the form of voice, signals and/or floor mechanics.

Calling official communicate quickly and as efficiently as possible at the spot. Don't sacrifice clarity. Use your voice and your signals should be clear and crisp. When you're finished move if/as necessary to your next spot and **GET THE BALL INTO PLAY AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.**

Non-Calling Official

One of the biggest keys to dead-ball efficiency is the non-calling official. When the calling official makes a call the non-calling official must ascertain:

- What the call was;
 - Move if and as necessary to the next spot while at the same time observing the players; then
 - Get the players ready for whatever situation is needed to bring the ball live.
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Moving to Keep the Game Moving

During dead ball time any time you have to move a distance of more than five (5) steps you should be jogging to the next spot. Five steps or less - walk briskly, with a purpose, to the spot with your head up.

Examples:

1. You are in the Lead position and call a foul. After you crack, hold and communicate, JOG out to the foul reporting spot, around the players, not through them, and report the foul.
2. You are the Trail official and the ball goes out of bounds on your sideline or endline on your side and now you are the Lead official, thus crossing the court and moving to the Lead position. The shortest distance between two points is a straight line, so JOG directly to your new position. Don't do a J hook.
3. You are the Trail official and the ball goes out of bounds on the Lead's sideline and you will be staying on that end of the court. As per NCOA mechanics, the Trail will ALWAYS administer sideline throw-ins, so that means you have to JOG across the court to get the ball and administer the throw-in.

These moments of MOVEMENT to a new spot during a dead ball will:

- Give the perception that you want to be there
 - Show you are not lazy and just taking in the game fee
 - Shorten the overall length of the game any where between 5-minutes and 15-minutes. Last time I checked we are not paid by the hour.
 - Keep the game flowing. When the game flows, the players usually play better and there is a rhythm to the game.
 - Keep the heart rate up thus burning a few extra calories.
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Prolong Dead Ball Periods

In the case of a time out, the dead ball period will be prolonged beyond what is needed for efficient communication.



That's why proper floor position during the time out is extremely important. Manuals will tell you where to be, but it's important to remember the mini-checklist or time out efficiency such as:

- Make your communication. Whose time out? Are there subs? Is a foul involved? Who's the shooter? or Where will the ball be inbounded?
 - Move to the appropriate floor position, and stay there. Find a line and toe up to it.
 - Stand still and tall. Don't pace or bounce the ball. The objective is to be available, but to be as unobtrusive as possible.
 - Use your time out wisely. Don't let your mind wander. The most important thing is to remind yourself where and how the ball will return to play.
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Being Challenged

Good officials hear all, but respond appropriately to important items. Don't wear an antenna or carry a seismograph in your pocket.



Use common sense. If you're challenged, respond with the spirit and letter of the rule. Don't let yourself be a whipping post. At the same time, if no one else heard or saw it, it didn't happen.

Even the best official will be challenged during a dead ball. When this happens, be prepared. If a simple but clear interpretation is the answer, give it, but don't launch into a mini clinic. This just encourages additional challenges.

Don't be sarcastic or condescending in your answer. Be clear and use rule terminology to your advantage. Let your tone imply that it's time to get things moving again.

Dealing With Technical Fouls



If and when a situation warrants a technical foul, follow the mechanics to the letter. It's designed to get the officials as far away from the "hot spots" as possible.

Allow a minimum of responses from the penalized individual, as they have their pride to protect. Above all, get the ball into play as quickly as possible.

When play resumes, the pressure will drop considerably.

Before Bringing Dead Ball Live

Before you give up the ball to administer a throw-in or free throw, quickly check:

- Table for Substitutes;
 - Shot Clock;
 - Game Clock;
 - Five vs Five; and
 - Partner is ready and in position.
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Keys to Dead Ball Efficiency

The three keys to Dead Ball Efficiency for officials are:

- (1) Clear communication by the calling official at the spot.
 - (2) Non-calling official ascertaining calling official's call and getting players ready.
 - (3) Moving as necessary quickly to your spot.
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