



Your Basketball League C.I.C.

Referee Good Practice Mechanics

Based on current mechanics

September 2025
Version 4.0





I'm now ready to get on court...

Refereeing is

To anticipate what will happen - 'Active mind-set'

Understand what is happening - 'basketball knowledge'

React properly for what has happened - 'Mental Image Training'

Learning Nexus through Basketball England

Make sure that you have completed your Nexus cards, questions and online theory exam. If not make sure this is completed and the relevant documents sent to Basketball England. You must complete the theory and practical portion of the course. If you have issues with this please contact your course tutor or Basketball England Officiating Department.

Qualification

Once you have completed your course, both the theory and the practical session, you will need to complete three practical games to be signed off for your e-certificate. I would use a couple of games as practice first and get feedback from your co-official and table crew or an observer. Once you feel competent you can then do your games and be signed off.

You have 12 months to be signed off after the completion of your practical portion of the course. To be signed off, this must be a **qualified** and **licensed Level 3** referee or above for a Level 2 referee. Level 1 officials do not need to be assessed.

Practice your skills...

Get as much practice as you can. This can be training games during club training sessions. The more you do the better you become. Speak to your mentor or another official, ask them questions and get feedback.

Looking professional

You should be correctly attired when officiating basketball games, there is a uniform for all officials. You can obtain your uniform through the YBL website or ask the league you are officiating in. Looking professional when officiating tells players and coaches that you are here to do a professional job.

Know the game

Not only should you know the rules of basketball, but the rules specific to the age group or league that you are officiating, as these can vary. You can find the Rules & Regulations published by the league you are officiating in on their websites.

The YBL Rules are found in the Club Admin Page.

Knowledge

Rules change! Keep up to date with the changes each season by attending an Officials Conference or Camp and reading any updates published by the YBL, BE or FIBA.

Next level...

Getting positive feedback and evaluations about your officiating, think you now have what it takes to up-skill and complete a Level 3 Course? Speak with your mentor or the YBL to see if when the next course is.



GETTING READY FOR EACH GAME...

Presentation

Take pride in your appearance. Make sure that you are wearing the correct uniform, an official YBL* referee top or the correct top for the league you are officiating in. Check with your co-official(s) so that you wear matching tops.

**YBL referees must wear a referee top, black trousers, black trainers or basketball shoes.*

Pre-Game

Both referees need to check that the table officials are present, the table equipment and scoreboard are working. The match ball is to be checked for suitability for the game and is not to be used for the warm ups once deemed suitable.

Make sure teams have provided a team list with the correct licence numbers to your table crew.

Complete a receipt and claim payment from the paying club. Receipts are available for printing from the YBL website.

Warm up suitably, including cardio and stretching.

Discuss with your co-official(s), agree on how the game will be called. Agree on things to watch out for, game mechanics, area's of responsibility and show good teamwork.

Have a pre-game discussion (around 7 minutes before tip), with the officiating team and coaches. This meeting will set the standards and ground rules for the game (*an outline is on the next page*).

In-Game

Remember your area of responsibility and mechanical movements on lead and trail. Use the correct signals. Make sure you keep up with play. Run, don't walk!

Use time-outs and time between quarters to discuss the game with your co-official(s). Check with the table crew if they are happy or have any points to raise. Remain professional, remember to hydrate yourself. Either stand in front of the table or stand towards the opposite side of the court to the table to review the game so far.

It is NOT acceptable for any official to start dribbling the ball or to start shooting the ball into any of the baskets.

It is important to be professional at all times, this works well and earns respect of the coaches and their players.

Post-Game

Shake hands with the players, coaches and the rest of the officials' team. Check the score-sheet is correct, that a captain is not 'signing the game under protest'. Once happy sign the scoresheet to complete the game. Do not rush out of the venue. Make sure everything is right before you leave. When possible leave with your co-officials.



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Official's Pre-Game - Generic

with co-officials, including table and head coaches, game day delegate (and both captains if you wish).

Reference new rules for this season (if any)

Rules for this game/division

What we except from players and coaches
(game management)

Asking for time-outs and substitutions

Communicating with on-floor and table officials.

Any issues the officiating crew need to know?

Game Protocols

Coaches must stay in their boxes

Bad language or behaviour

Only one coach to be standing from each team

What is accepted or tolerable conduct

Only recorded head-coach able to ask officials questions

Potential problems

Only team/on-court captain can ask officials questions.

Game management concerns

Players to ask table for substitutions, not coaches.

Game Management

Playing the advantage (RSPQ)

Call the obvious!

Legal guarding position (cylinder)

Accidental contact vs. legitimate contact

Eye contact with all officials, on floor & table

Double/Triple whistles

Verbally and visually confirming free-throws

Warnings to coaches

Warnings to players

Unsportsmanlike fouls

Technical Fouls (Coach, Bench, Player, 'W' Warning)

Correctable errors

Fighting / Bench clearance

Mechanics - AoR

AoR (Area of Responsibility)

Lead looking for foul on shooter

Lead primary coverage

Trail looking up for hand checks/interference

Moving along the baseline/mirror

Back court

Setting up on lead

Pressing (referee positions)

Closing down

(Rotation (3PO))

Rebounding

DON' BALL WATCH!

Interaction with the Table Officials

Are they ready to start?

Listen for horns / buzzers

Regular eye contact.

substitutions and time-outs.

Post-Game

Leave as a crew

Self evaluate (see next page)

Review game; missed calls etc

Report to the league any issues or concerns

FINAL THOUGHTS

Be consistent in your officiating and with your co-official.

Trust your co-official.

Talk to each other.

SELF-EVALUATE - IMPROVING YOURSELF



Did basketball 'the game' win? If 'yes', then you had a reasonable game. If 'no', or 'not sure' then start to self analyse:

Did I call all shooting foul?

Did I call all the fouls which put the team at a disadvantage?

Did I get into the correct position to be able to call fouls and violations correctly?

Did I call poor skills, such as travelling/ illegal dribbles, so that playing standards are enhanced?

Was I able to communicate my calls clearly and with authority?

Did I cooperate with all my co-officials?

Did I give them help when needed, but ensured that my areas of responsibility were upheld?

If at all possible ask more experienced referees to give you a pointer to improve your game.

Can you select one improvement from the above guidance and work hard at it during the next game?

Level 1 Referee Junior Local League Some Junior NBL games & School Games 1	Level 2 Referee Junior & Senior Local League, School Games, Junior NBL, BCUS, AoC, EABL & WEABL. 2	Level 3 Referee As a level 2 and Senior National League 3	Level 4 Referee High-Standard Domestic referee; Including BBL 4	Level 5 Referee International FIBA Trained referee; Including BBL and Euro League 5
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Who administers a time-out or substitute request?

Using a separate buzzer from the game clock, the scorer signals the referees at the appropriate time and gives the time-out or sub signal.



Who displays the foul markers?

The timekeeper displays the fouls markers, after it has been confirmed by the scorer. "first personal, second team"



When you should hear a buzzer?

Before the Game / During Half Time

03:00 A manual buzzer from the timekeeper.

01:30 A manual buzzer from the timekeeper.

In between quarters

00:30 A manual buzzer 30 seconds before the start of Q2, Q4 and any overtime period

During a time-out

00:50 A manual buzzer (if the clock has not got the function) ten seconds before the end of the time-out with a '10' signal.

When does the clock stop running?

Upon hearing a whistle from the referee.

After a time-out request (before the basket is made) after a made basket for the opposing team.

After a made basket in the last two minutes in the fourth quarter or in the last two minutes in any overtime period.

When does the clock start running?

On the first tip of the ball (at the start of Q1), when the referee lowers their hand and the ball touches a player on court.

When the referee lowers their hand on an inbound (sideline or baseline) ball.

After the last free-throw, after touching the ring, when the ball touches a player.

**THE CLOCK DOES NOT STOP AFTER A BASKET,
Unless in the last 2 minutes (L2M) of Q4 or any overtime period.**

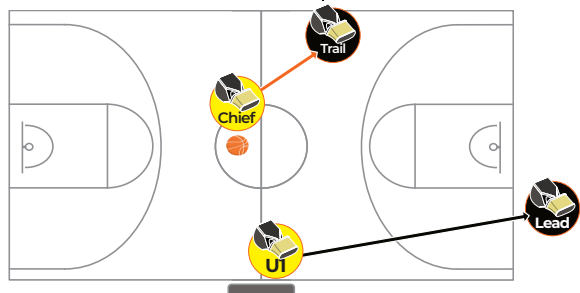
Starting the Game - Positions

2
PO

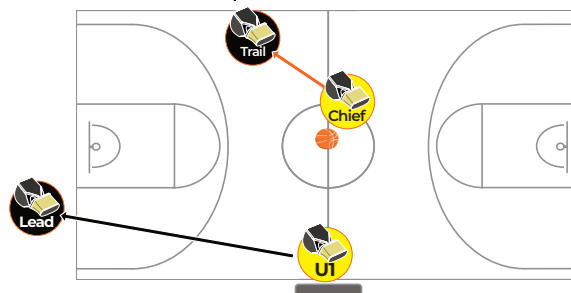
Crew chief to become trail in any direction of play.

Umpire 1 to become lead in any direction of play.

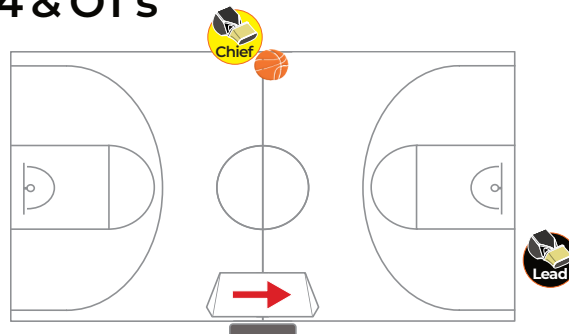
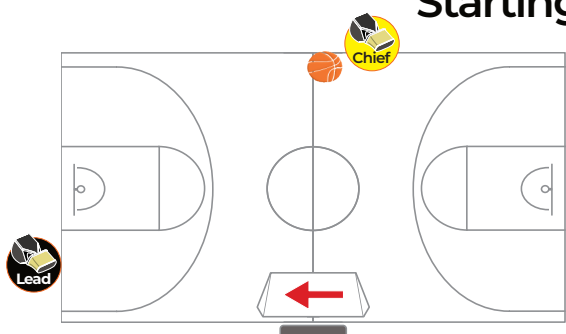
Play to Chief's left



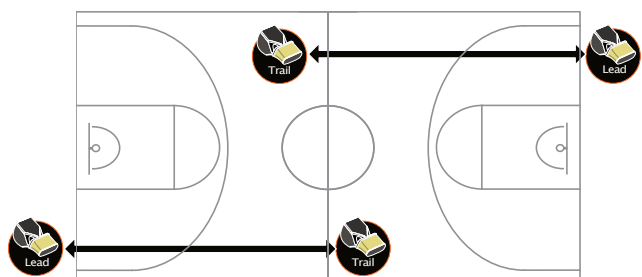
Play to Chief's right



Starting Qtr 2, 3, 4 & OT's

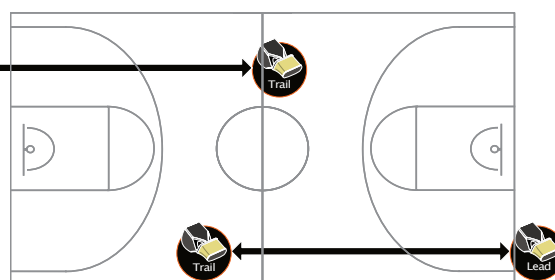


Stay the same side!



Lead and trail are to stay in the same position until something is called for you to rotate sides.

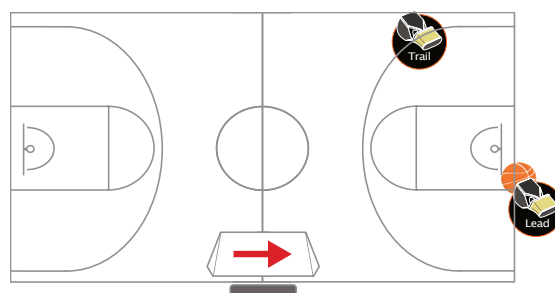
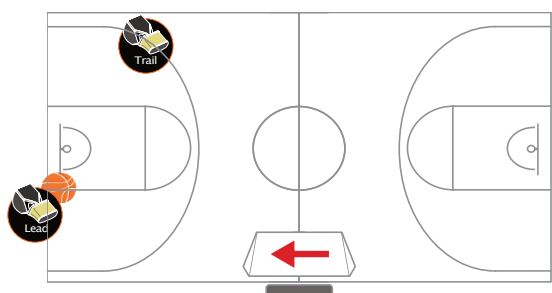
or



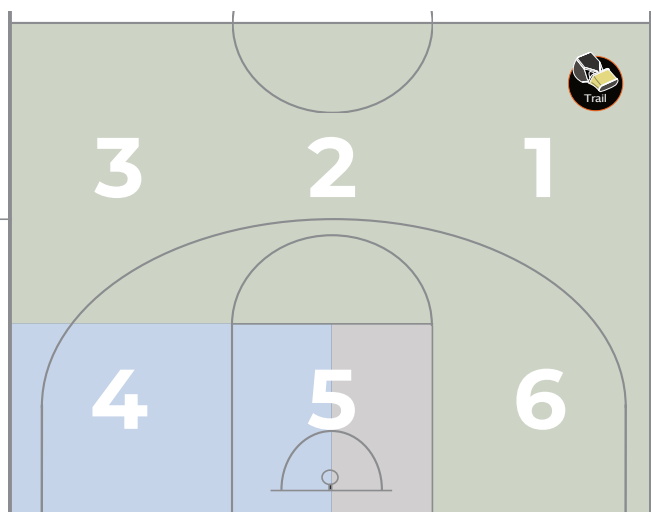
Free-Throw administration

The lead official administering the ball to the free-throw shooter is always table side

The 'trail' official is always opposite the table in-line with the free-throw line.

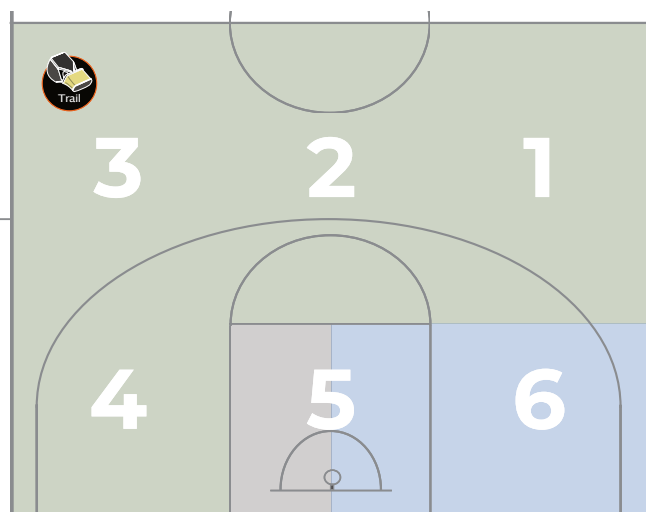


Area of Responsibilities



Lead Left side of the Basket

Green (Boxes 1, 2, 3 & 6) Trail Responsibility
Blue (Boxes 4 & left side of 5) Lead
Grey (right side of box 5) joint

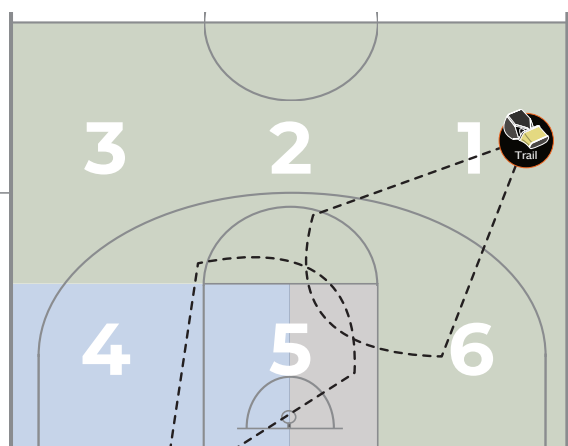


Lead Right side of the Basket

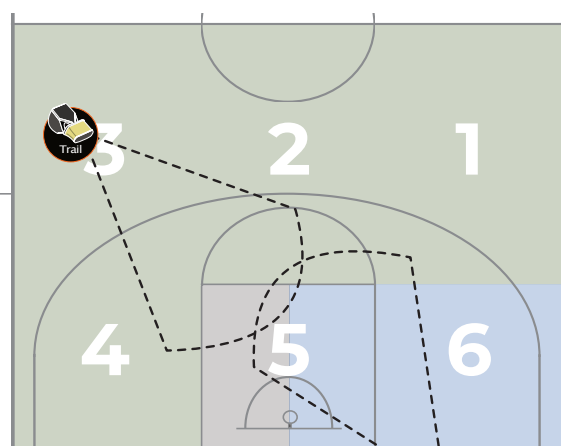
Green (Boxes 1, 2, 3 & 4) Trail Responsibility
Blue (Boxes 5 & right side of 5) Lead
Grey (left side of box 5) joint

Starting positions

Start each offence in your starting position.
Adjust accordingly.

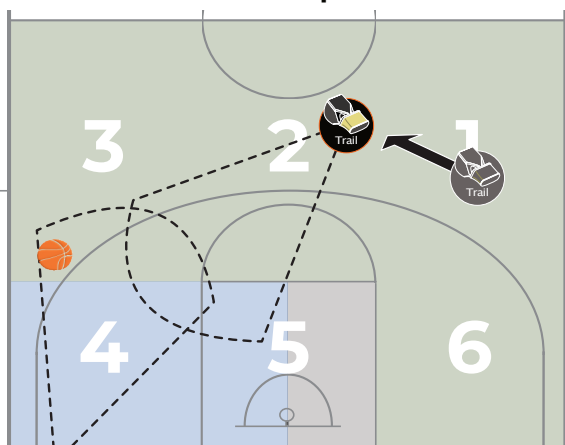


Left side of basket Set-Up
AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY

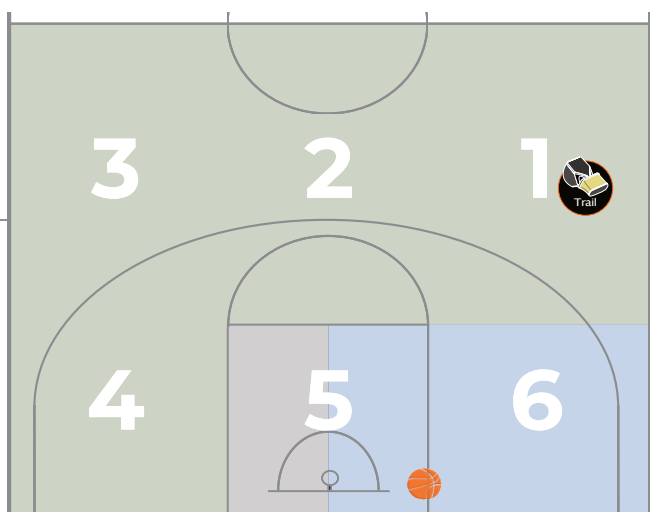


Right side of basket Set-Up
AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY

Trail Movement position



TRAIL OFFICIAL CAN
MOVE TO SEE PLAYERS
AND BALL IN THEIR AOR



Lead to the Action!

If the lead is on the opposite
side of box 5 when there is
action or a block play - move
over to officiate it! Trail is not
to rotate, and lead to move back
after the action has happened.

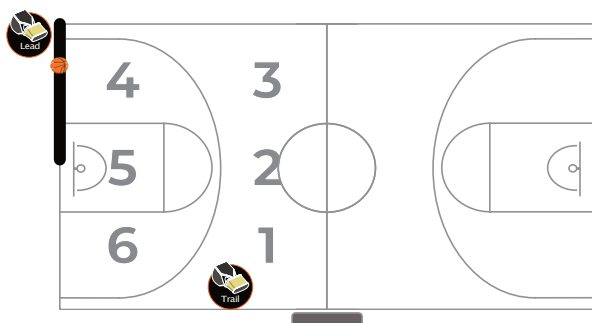
Out of Bounds (Opposite lead)



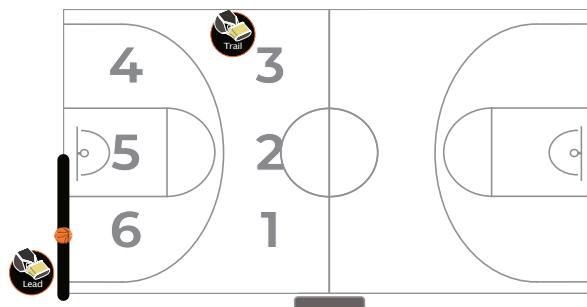
TRAIL CALLS AN OUT OF BOUNDS IN THEIR
AREA, TRAIL AFTER SIGNALLING WILL BECOME
LEAD ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE , WHILE THE LEAD
THEN BECOMES THE NEW TRAIL

AoR: Area's of Responsibility (2PO) MECHANICS

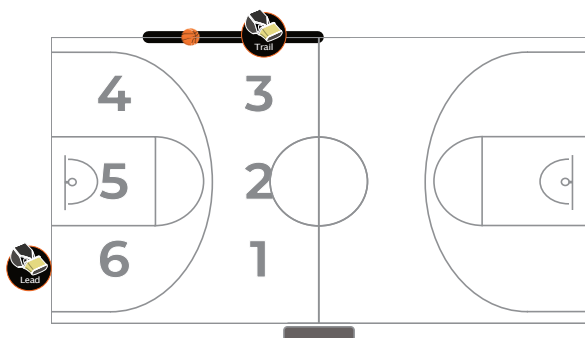
**2
PO**



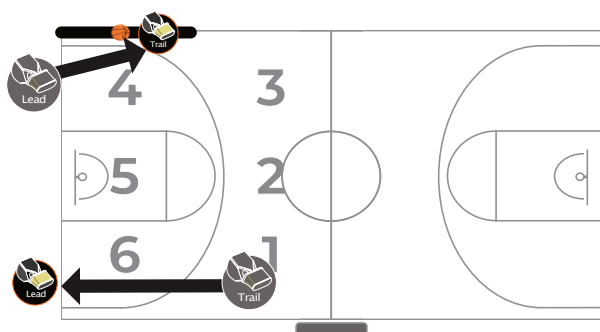
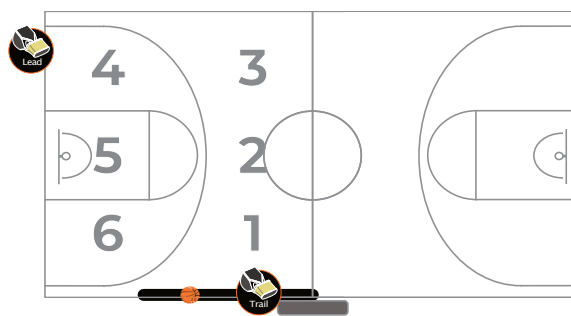
OUT OF BOUNDS and inbound the ball baseline, left of the basket.
- Box 4 - Lead Official inbound



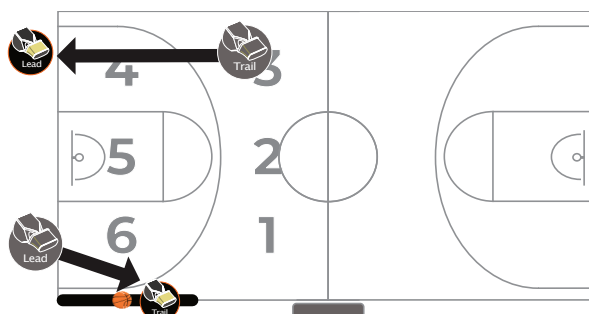
OUT OF BOUNDS and inbound the ball baseline, right of the basket.
- Box 6 - Lead Official inbound



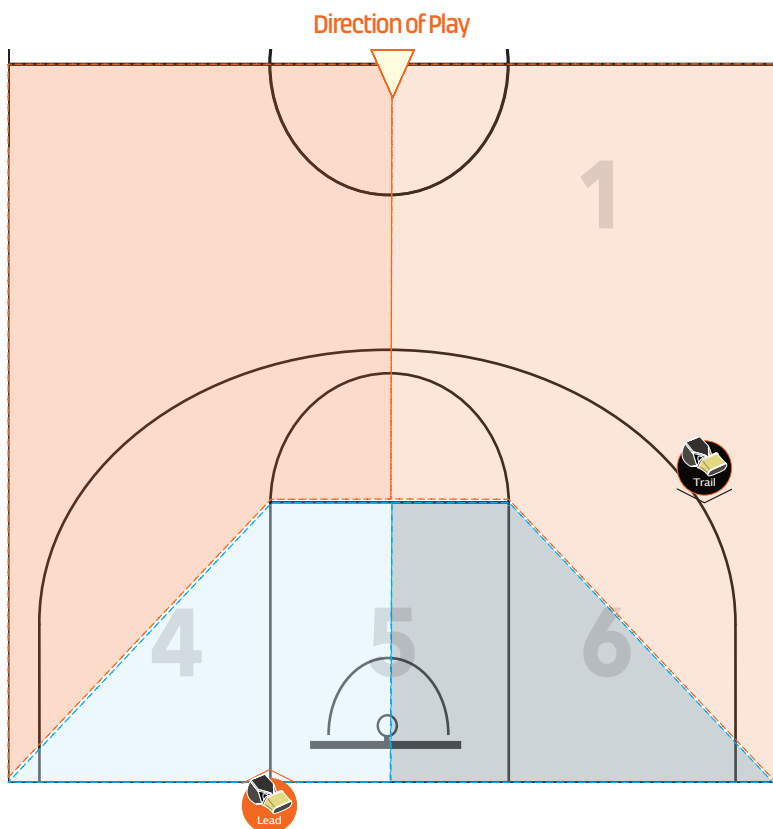
OUT OF BOUNDS and inbound the ball on the sideline in box 1 and 3
- Trail Official inbound
Lead and trail set-up



OUT OF BOUNDS and inbound the ball on the sideline in box 4 and 6
Lead to switch with Trail Official and inbound the ball.
Lead and trail set-up



Inbounding the ball after a violation or non-shooting foul When 'Lead' Inbounds the ball



Following non-shooting foul and any violation in part of Box 4, 5 and part of Box 6, the lead referee will inbound the ball on the baseline closest to where the infraction occurred.

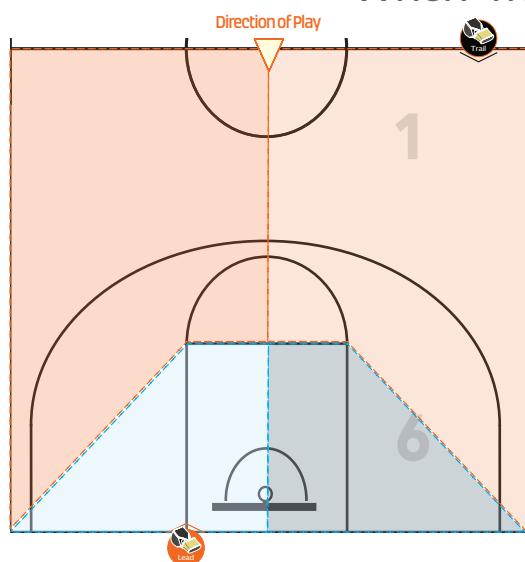
Part of Box 4 (shaded blue), and to the left side of Box 5, inbound to the left of the basket.

Part of Box 6 (shaded blue) and to the right of Box 5 inbound to the right of the basket.

The shaded orange sections the trail referee will inbound the ball closest to where the infraction occurred.

Lead & trail to adjust to their new position accordingly, depending where the ball is now being inbounded by lead.

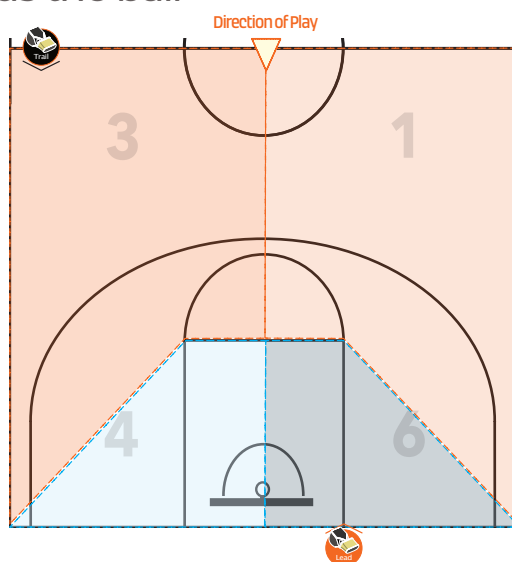
When 'Trail' Inbounds the ball



Following a back court violation, the ball will be inbounded opposite the table in the front court, with a new 14 second offence.

Following non-shooting foul and any violation in box 1 and 6, the trail referee will inbound the ball on the sideline closest to where the infraction occurred.

The shaded orange sections the trail referee will inbound the ball closest to where the infraction occurred.



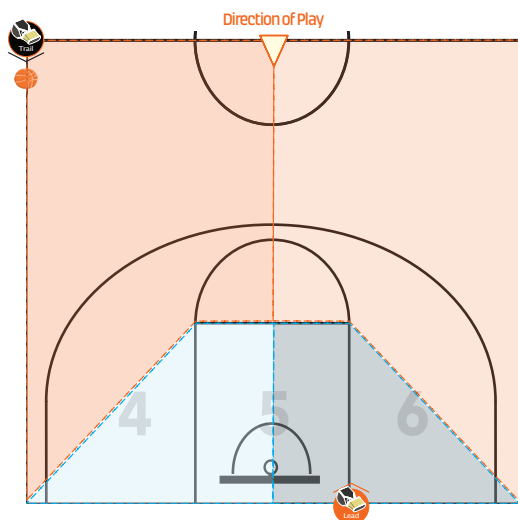
Following non-shooting foul and any violation in box 3 and 4, the trail referee will inbound the ball on the sideline closest to where the infraction occurred.

The shaded orange sections the trail referee will inbound the ball closest to where the infraction occurred.

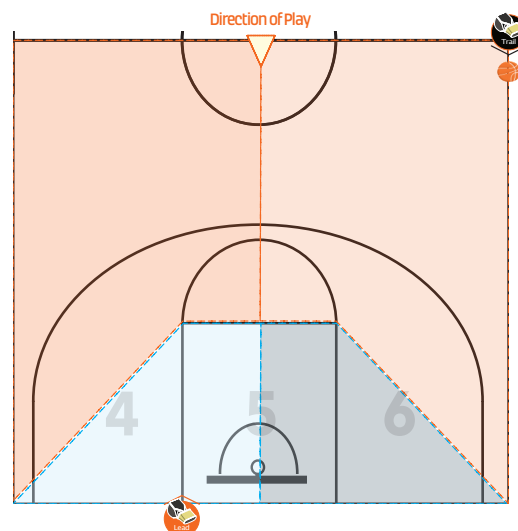
Lead & trail to adjust to their new position accordingly.

Inbounding the ball after a violation or non-shooting foul

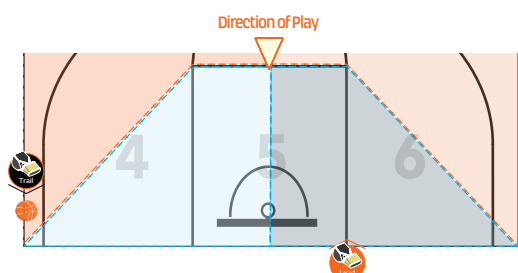
Inbounds the ball Examples



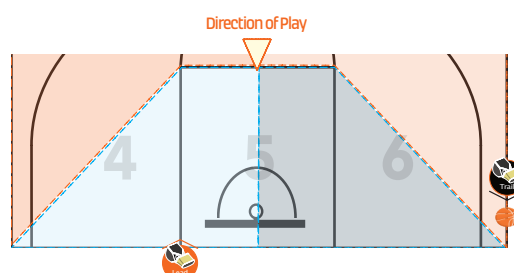
Inbounding Box 3 and Box 4, where the ball is being inbounded on the sideline. The trail referee inbounds the ball while lead will set-up on the opposite side of the basket on the baseline.



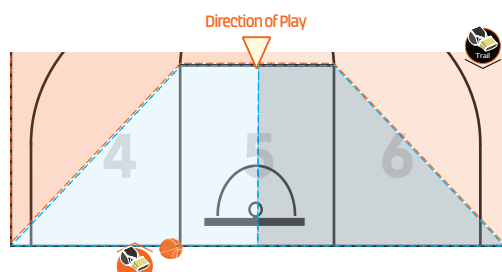
Inbounding Box 1 and Box 6, where the ball is being inbounded on the sideline. The trail referee inbounds the ball while lead will set-up on the opposite side of the basket on the baseline.



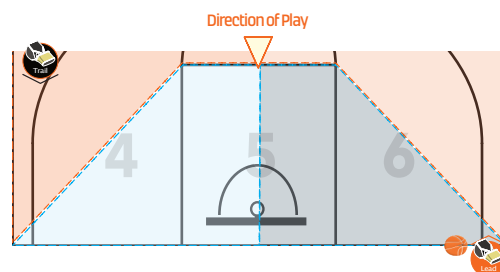
Sideline inbound (box 4), where the ball is being inbounded on the sideline. The trail referee inbounds the ball while lead will set-up on the opposite side of the basket on the baseline.



Sideline inbound (box 6), where the ball is being inbounded on the sideline. The trail referee inbounds the ball while lead will set-up on the opposite side of the basket on the baseline.



Baseline in-bound (box 4 & 5), where the ball is being inbounded on the baseline. The lead referee inbounds the ball while trail will set-up on the opposite side of the basket in the trail position.



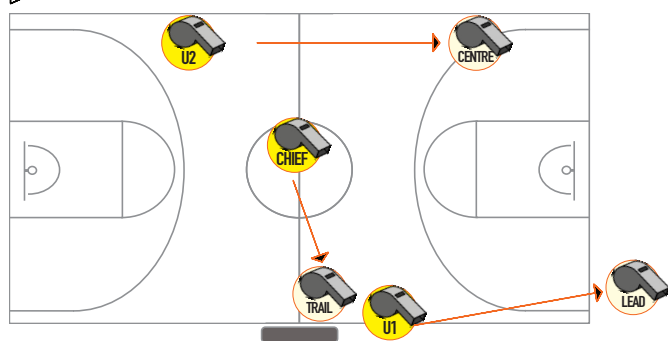
Baseline in-bound (box 5 & 6), where the ball is being inbounded on the baseline. The lead referee inbounds the ball while trail will set-up on the opposite side of the basket in the trail position.

AoR: Area's of Responsibility (3PO) 3 PERSON OFFICIATING

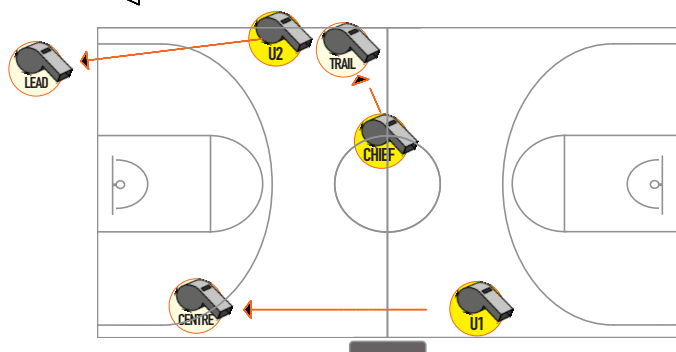


Starting the Game - Positions

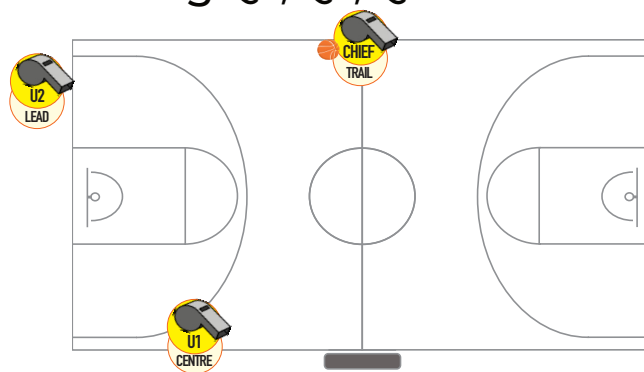
▶ Play to Chief's left



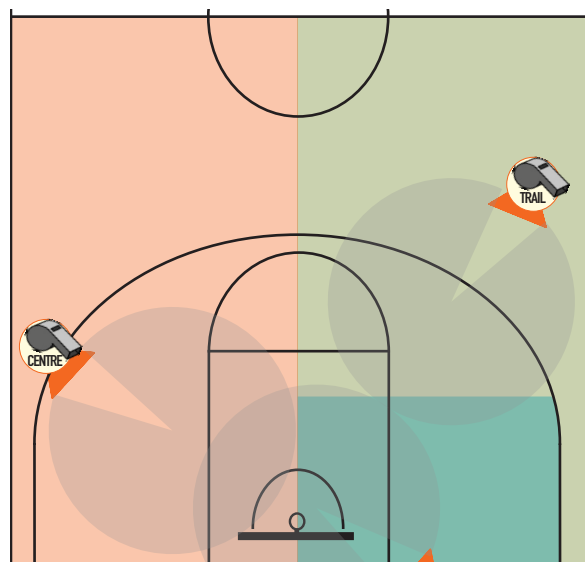
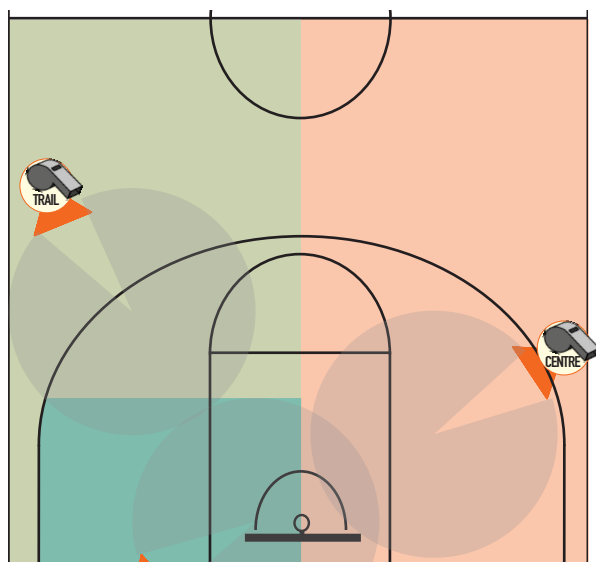
◀ Play to Chief's right



Starting Q2, Q3, Q4 & OT



AoR: Area's of Responsibility (3PO) 3 PERSON OFFICIATING



DON'T CHANGE POSITIONS WITH LESS THAN TEN SECONDS ON THE SHOT CLOCK OR
IF YOU THINK THE PLAYER IS ABOUT TO SHOOT THE BALL.

