

Guidelines for the "No Zone Defence" Rule for all U14 and Younger Competitions



In accordance with FIBA guidelines for players under the age of 14, Basketball England has, since 2008, incorporated the "No Zone Defence" rule. The intention is to help the development of young players both offensively and defensively.

Areas of Emphasis: Guidelines for Coaches

Areas of Emphasis, endorsed the use of no zones in U14 basketball, to assist with the skill development of future British players. Within both the ON-Ball and OFF-Ball areas, specific recommendations were identified in support of the 'No Zone' rule for clubs and their coaches:

- Coaches must commit to all teams being able to play effective half court and full court man to man as their primary defence as a challenge to develop our British players capability both ON-BALL and OFF-BALL
- Coaches to drill more in the full court to give ON-BALL defenders more practice and to highlight the competencies needed by both offence and defence.
- Increase the emphasis on the development of physical abilities so that players are able to hold a defensive stance while in help position and are physically capable of reacting quickly to move and adjust in OFF-BALL situations.

It is also noted in the Areas of Emphasis that pressing full court at junior levels when the margin in the game is wide is usually counterproductive. This is particularly so at U12 and U14 levels. As a general rule, a dominant full court man to man defence which the opposition is incapable of outplaying should cease when the team is 20 points ahead. We trust that our coaches will know when too much is too much. Full court man to man is best tested against the best teams not the worst.

What is a Zone Defence?

For the purpose of this rule, for competitions under the jurisdiction of England Basketball, a zone defence is defined as ***"any defence which does not involve normal person-to-person / man-to-man defensive principles"***.

Violations Occur When:

- One or more players are not in a normal man-to-man position in relation to their player and the basketball.
- A player cutting through the key is not defended in normal man-to-man coverage; i.e. by following them, switching or bumping them to change direction.

Administration of the "No Zone Defence" Rule:

The match referees are responsible for administering the rule and will be the sole judges in deciding whether a defensive team is employing a zone defence. They will take into account the intention of the defensive team and whether there is deliberate use of a zone defence at a critical time during the game. If they are in any doubt, the benefit of the doubt will be given to the defensive team. Otherwise they should take immediate action as follows:

1. Issue a warning for the first violation of the rule.
2. When, in the opinion of the referees, a second violation of the rule occurs, they will charge the coach of the defending team with a 'Bench' Technical Foul.
3. A further violation will result in a Bench' Technical Foul charged to the coach of the defending team.

Regular Breaches of the "No Zone Defence" Rule:

Complaints regarding a specific team regularly employing a zone defence will be referred to Basketball England. Persistent complaints will be referred to the Competitions Committee with the possible consequences being the use of an Observer to oversee a particular team or match and/or the loss of competition points and/or disqualification.

Examples of possible defensive positions in relation to the location of the ball are displayed below:

Examples of possible defensive positions are shown in relation to the location of the ball and offensive players. It shows examples of where players may sag from their defender to help other team mates. This is acceptable in man to man defence.

