

Legal Guarding Position

This week's email is about legal guarding position. Below you will find the rule as written in the rulebook, five plays to watch, and then some discussion on those plays. Please feel free to [email me](#) back with any other thoughts or questions you may have on these plays.

Some other areas of the rulebook to look would be:

- Page 29 Rule 4-7 Blocking, Charging
- Page 41 Rule 4-45 Verticality
- Page 65 Rule 10-7 Contact

Definition:

Page 34 Rule 4-23:

ART. 1: Guarding is the act of legally placing the body in the path of an offensive opponent. There is no minimum distance required between the guard and opponent, but the maximum is 6 feet when closely guarded. Every player is entitled to a spot on the playing court provided such player gets there first without illegally contacting an opponent. A player who extends an arm, shoulder, hip or leg into the path of an opponent is not considered to have a legal position if contact occurs.

ART. 2: To obtain an initial legal guarding position:

- a. The guard must have both feet touching the playing court.
- b. The front of the guard's torso must be facing the opponent.

ART. 3: After the initial legal guarding position is obtained:

- a. The guard may have one or both feet on the playing court or be airborne, provided he/she has inbound status.
- b. The guard is not required to continue facing the opponent.
- c. The guard may move laterally or obliquely to maintain position, provided it is not toward the opponent when contact occurs.
- d. The guard may raise hands or jump within his/her own vertical plane.
- e. The guard may turn or duck to absorb the shock of imminent contact.

ART. 4: Guarding an opponent with the ball or a stationary opponent without the ball:

- a. No time or distance is required to obtain an initial legal position.
- b. If the opponent with the ball is airborne, the guard must have obtained legal position before the opponent left the floor.

Plays: As you watch each play think if the defender established LG and did they move to maintain it.

Play 1 - <https://youtu.be/ezKArz5se60>

Play 2 - <https://youtu.be/ovDtA5GdOc0>

Play 3 - <https://youtu.be/gIWVH4vhydk>

Play 4 - <https://youtu.be/x-2YjGWLw6w>

Play 5 - <https://youtu.be/fW6zrNjzcoQ>

Discussion:

Play 1 – This play shows a defender that establishes LG position and maintains it. The defender is allowed to jump in their vertical plane which he does. Correct No Call on this play. This play the lead official needs to be engaged in this play as this is a secondary defender. The lead needs to have a patient whistle on this play but be willing to help if that contact was illegal. Crew did a good job on this play.

Play 2 – First we need to determine if the defender established LG position. She does as she has two feet on court facing her opponent. She then maintains her position and contact occurs. Therefore the contact that occurs is the responsibility of the offensive player so a player-control foul should be called. When we are in transition we need to focus on the defense and talk to ourselves to determine when they get legal, if contact occurs prior to us knowing the defender was legal then it's a defensive foul, if they did establish then it's a PC foul.

Play 3 – In this play the defender is in a legal guarding position but when she slides she creates the contact with the dribbler. This should be whistled a blocking foul. The lead official should have a whistle on this play. The lead began to rotate but needs to see this drive occur and stop to referee the play. Anytime that we are rotating our accuracy decrease. Had the Lead stopped a step or two into their rotation they would have had a better chance to see the sideways movement. The C also has an opportunity at this play. When the offensive player split the two defender up top the C should be moving their eyes to the next line of defense which is the player in the middle of the paint.

Play 4 – This defender has established a legal guarding position. Did he step to the right and/or have too wide of a base? That is hard to see on the film. But we need a whistle for a foul on this play. We give the ball back to black but clearly it went off of black OOB. We cannot trade off calls. If we look at the referees position on this play. The lead needs to take another step closer to the lane line (close-down) to see if the defender is/maintains legal guarding position. Also the C does not position adjust well, he steps down which makes him

straight-lined and now is looking through players. Had he taken a step up he would have had a better angle to help on this play. The trail on this play is in a good position but needs to stay engaged and may have had a look at this play.

Play 5 – Did the defender establish legal guarding position? Yes as she has two feet on the floor facing the opponent. But the defender has a wide base and an extended leg into the path of a dribbler and the dribbler gets her head and shoulder past the defender therefore the defender did not maintain her legal guarding position. This is a blocking foul. There is too much contact to not have a whistle on this play.