



December 10, 2025

NFHS Basketball Weekly Rule Interpretations

Rule Reference: 4-11 (Continuous Motion)

Purpose

The continuous motion rule exists to allow an offensive player to complete a legitimate try or tap for goal when a defensive foul occurs during the shooting attempt. When a defensive foul occurs after the habitual throwing motion has begun but before the ball is clearly in flight, the rule permits the shooter to complete the normal shooting motion, including customary arm, foot, and body movements. This rule applies only to defensive fouls and only within the defined interval from the start of the habitual throwing motion until the ball is released.

Rule Language

- 4-11-1: Continuous motion applies to a try or tap for field goals and free throws, but it has no significance unless there is a foul by any defensive player during the interval which begins when the habitual throwing movement starts a try or with the touching on a tap and ends when the ball is clearly in flight.
- 4-11-2: If an opponent fouls after a player has started a try or tap for field goal, the player is permitted to complete the customary arm movement, and if pivoting or stepping when fouled, may complete the usual foot or body movement in any activity while holding the ball. These privileges are granted only when the usual throwing motion has started before the foul occurs and before the ball is in flight.
- 4-11-3: Continuous motion does not apply if a teammate fouls after a player has started a try or tap for field goal and before the ball is in flight. The ball becomes dead immediately.

Game Scenario # 1

A1 has ended their dribble in the free throw lane and (a) is stepping toward the basket; (b) is pivoting toward the basket. In both cases, B1 fouls A1. In (a), A1 legally finishes their last step. In (b), A1 completes the pivot, before immediately jumping to attempt a try. **RULING:** In (a) and (b), if the try is successful, the goal counts. If the try is unsuccessful, A1 will be awarded two free throws as it was a two-point attempt. **COMMENT:** It should be noted that A1 does not have to be stepping toward the goal for continuous motion to apply. Some shot attempts require a player to step away from the basket to begin the habitual motion that precedes a try (e.g. "step back" jump shot, 'euro step').

Game Scenario # 2

A1 starts the free-throwing motion when B5 fouls A5. **RULING:** The continuous motion rule applies and A1 may release the ball and if the throw is successful, the point counts.

Interpretation & Enforcement

- Continuous motion applies both to tries and taps for field goals and free throws, but it has no significance unless there is a foul by the defense during the interval which begins when the habitual trying or tapping movement starts and ends when the ball is clearly in flight.
- If a player with the ball is pivoting or stepping when fouled, they may complete the usual foot or body movement in any activity while holding the ball to complete the try.