2026–27 WIAA Shot Clock

Rules and Protocol

Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association

Shot clock rules reset instructions and alternating possession

Audience: Officials, Coaches & Administrators

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2026-27 WIAA Shot Clock Rules & Protocol

Shot Clock Rules, Reset Logic & AP Arrow Determinations

Audience: Officials, Coaches & Administrators

SECTION 1 — SCOPE & APPLICABILITY

Beginning with the 2026–27 season, member schools may use a 35-second shot clock by mutual agreement for boys and girls varsity non-conference games. When used, the shot clock applies for the entire game, including extra periods. All resets described in this guide are to 35 seconds.

Level of Play

- Varsity non-conference games: Both teams must agree to use the shot clock before the contest begins.
- Schools must report games using the shot clock to the WIAA office through the WIAA website.
- Schools must complete the post-contest survey for data collection.
- Schools must communicate the use of the shot clock to the assigned officials in advance.
- Use this guide with applicable NFHS rules and WIAA directions for contests using the shot clock.

Additional Applicability Notes

- **Mercy Rule:** When in effect, shot clock use continues.
- **Coaches Box:** 28 feet in length.

SECTION 2 — EQUIPMENT & INSTALLATION

Shot Clock Installation Requirements

For contests using the shot clock, equipment must be properly installed and mounted in accordance with applicable NFHS requirements. Contact the WIAA office for direction if required equipment is unavailable or improperly installed.

NOTE 1: When a school hosts a tournament or shootout utilizing multiple gyms, and a traditional backboard-mounted shot clock is not feasible in an auxiliary gym, shot clocks must be mounted on the wall behind the basket, at or above the backboard, and must be clearly visible and unobstructed.

NOTE 2: A varsity game cannot begin unless both shot clocks are functioning properly. If either shot clock is not working, and the clocks are properly mounted, the game must be postponed or moved to another gym with functioning shot clocks.

FIELD NOTE — Improperly Mounted Shot Clocks

Q: Shot clocks are mounted on top of the backboard (not recessed). What should officials do?

A: Officials who become aware of improperly installed shot clocks should notify the WIAA office for direction.

Positioning Requirements

- **Primary Gym:** Shot clock must be recessed and mounted on the supports behind each backboard.
- **Auxiliary Gym:** Wall-mounted behind the basket at or above backboard height; clearly visible and unobstructed.
- Both shot clocks must be in working order to start the game.

Display Guidelines

- LED lights on the **shot clock** → designate expiration of the shot clock period **ONLY**.
- LED lights on the **backboard** → designate end of each quarter or overtime period **ONLY**.
- LED lights on the backboard **DO NOT** illuminate on expiration of the shot clock period.
- LED lights are not mandatory (*NFHS Rules* p. 74).

- **WIAA Recommendation: Do NOT display tenths of a second on the shot clock.**

Shot Clock Horn

- Must have a sound **DISTINCT and DIFFERENT** from the game-clock horn.
- The shot clock horn does **NOT stop play** unless recognized by an official's whistle.
- Officials make the final determination when there is doubt regarding a shot-clock violation.
- If horn sounds cannot be made distinct: officials must rely on the game clock display, shot clock display, and the official's whistle - not the horn alone. Schools must correct this equipment issue.

> **FIELD NOTE — Identical Horn Sounds**
>
> **Q: The shot clock horn sounds the same as the game-clock horn. What should officials do?**
>
> A: NFHS guidelines require the shot clock horn to be distinct and different from the game-clock horn. If school equipment cannot produce distinct sounds, officials must rely on the game clock display, shot clock display, and the official's whistle - not the horn alone - to determine violations. The shot clock horn does NOT stop play unless recognized by an official's whistle. Schools must correct this equipment deficiency. Notify WIAA administration when horn sounds cannot be distinguished.

Backup Equipment (Required at Scorer's Table)

- Alternate timing device (stopwatch/cell phone timer).
- Alternate sound device (air horn or device producing a distinct sound).
- If one shot clock fails during the game: turn off **BOTH** and use the alternate procedure (e.g., announcer counts down from 10 seconds).

SECTION 3 — SHOT CLOCK OPERATOR (SCO)

- The SCO must be **seated next to the timer** at the scorer's and timer's table.
- The SCO controls a separate timing device with a distinct-sounding horn.
- The SCO must have an alternate timing device and alternate sound device available at all times.

SECTION 4 — STARTING THE SHOT CLOCK

Start the Shot Clock When:

1. The ball touches or is legally touched by a player on the court on a throw-in.
2. A team gains initial control after a jump ball or an unsuccessful try for a goal.
3. There is a change in team control.

Turn Off the Shot Clock When:

- The game clock is **equal to or less than** the shot clock period.

SECTION 5 — SHOT CLOCK VIOLATION

The team in control must attempt a try for a field goal within the **35-second shot clock period**.

A Try for Goal Is Valid When:

- The ball has left the shooter's hand(s) **before** the sounding of the shot clock horn, **AND**
- The ball subsequently strikes the ring, flange, or enters the basket.

It Is a Violation When:

- A try for goal does not leave the shooter's hand(s) before expiration, **OR**
- It leaves the hand(s) before expiration but does not subsequently strike the ring, flange, or enter the basket.

Official's Signal for Violation:

Stop signal → Tap the head (Signal Chart #41) → Directional signal → Designate throw-in spot nearest to ball at time of violation.

SECTION 6 — SHOT CLOCK RESET INSTRUCTIONS

TIER 1 — NO RESET (Leave Unexpired Time on Clock)

- Ball deflected out of bounds by the defense — offense retains possession.
- Player injured or loses a contact lens.
- Either team calls a timeout.
- Shot attempt does **NOT** contact the rim/flange **AND** results in a held ball **AND** the AP arrow favors the shooting team (offense).
- Any double personal foul or double technical foul when the offense retains possession.

- Held ball during team control when the AP arrow favors the offense (team in control).
- Inadvertent whistle when team control existed at the time of the whistle.

TIER 2 — RESET TO 35 SECONDS

- Personal or technical foul committed by the defensive team (prior to a try for goal) and the ball is to be inbounded in the frontcourt by the offense.
- Kicked or fisted ball violation by the defensive team, and the ball is to be inbounded in the frontcourt by the offense.
- Inadvertent whistle when there was **NO** player or team possession at the time of the whistle, and the AP arrow favors either team for a throw-in in its frontcourt.

- Offense gains control in the frontcourt after an unsuccessful field goal attempt that **contacts the ring or flange**.
- Offense gains control after an unsuccessful free throw that remains in play in frontcourt.
- Defense is assessed a foul after an unsuccessful free throw that remains in play, or after an unsuccessful field goal that contacts the ring or flange, or during a successful try — provided the offense will inbound in the frontcourt.
- Defense causes the ball to go out of bounds in the frontcourt following an unsuccessful free throw or unsuccessful field goal attempt that contacts the ring or flange.
- No team control; offense awarded possession in their frontcourt via AP arrow following an unsuccessful free throw or unsuccessful field goal that hits the rim.
- A violation occurs (other than an opponent causing OOB or kicking/fisting the ball) and the defense is awarded the ball in its frontcourt.
- After any double personal foul when **ONLY ONE** foul is intentional or flagrant and the offended team is awarded possession in its frontcourt.
- After a shot that contacts the rim/flange is batted into the backcourt and OOB by the shooting team — defense gains possession in their frontcourt.
- Held ball in the frontcourt: AP arrow favors the defense for a **FRONTCOURT** throw-in.
- Offensive violation (travel, 3 seconds, etc.) - defense awarded ball for throw-in in their frontcourt per normal rules - reset to :35.
- Offensive foul — defense awarded ball in backcourt - reset to :35.

> **★ NEW —**
>
> Ball hits the rim on a pass or deflection and is recovered by the offense in the FRONTCOURT

★ NEW —

Ball lodged between the rim and backboard - AP arrow awards possession to the offense

★ NEW —

Ball goes out of bounds from the opening jump ball or OT jump before either team gains possession

AND

the resulting throw-in is in the FRONTCOURT

- Defense causes a kicked/fisted ball violation in backcourt - reset to 35.
- Change in team control during a live ball (steal, turnover) - wait for **ACTUAL possession** before resetting.
- Defensive rebound after any field goal attempt (whether or not the shot contacted the rim/flange).
- Offensive violation (travel, 3 seconds, etc.) - defense awarded ball for throw-in in their backcourt per normal rules - reset to 35.
- Offensive foul — defense awarded ball in backcourt - reset to 35.
- Defensive player causes a held ball during the offensive team's team control in the frontcourt, **AND** the AP arrow favors the defensive team for a throw-in in the **BACKCOURT**.
- Single foul occurring in the backcourt — defense awarded ball; reset to 35; new 10-second count.
- Ball out of bounds by the offense in the backcourt - defense receives ball; reset to :35.
- Offense gains control after an unsuccessful free throw that remains in play in backcourt reset to :35.

★ NEW —

Ball hits the rim on a pass or deflection and is recovered by the offense in the BACKCOURT reset to 35 seconds.

★ NEW —

Single technical foul called: set shot clock to 35 seconds after the official reports the foul and before the throw-in at the division line.

★ NEW —

Ball goes out of bounds from the opening jump ball or OT jump before either team gains possession

AND

the resulting throw-in is in the BACKCOURT

SECTION 7 — AP ARROW (ALTERNATING POSSESSION) LOGIC

Use the table below as a quick-reference matrix. Each scenario group is also described in detail beneath the table.

Situation	AP Favors	Location	Reset Action
Held ball during team control	Offense	Any	No reset
Held ball during team control	Defense	Frontcourt throw-in	Reset to 35 sec.
Held ball during team control	Defense	Backcourt throw-in	Reset to 35 sec.
Shot or free throw hits rim	Offense	Frontcourt	Reset to 35 sec.
Shot or free throw hits rim	Defense	Any	Reset to 35 sec.
Shot does not hit rim	Offense (shooting team)	Any	No reset
Shot does not hit rim	Defense	Any	Reset to 35 sec.
Inadvertent whistle with no team control	Either team	Frontcourt throw-in	Reset to 35 sec.
Inadvertent whistle with no team control	Either team	Backcourt throw-in	Reset to 35 sec.
Inadvertent whistle with team control	N/A	Any	No reset
Lodged ball	Offense	Any	Reset to 35 sec.
Lodged ball	Defense	Any	Reset to 35 sec.

During Team Control — Defensive Player Causes a Held Ball

- AP favors **OFFENSE** → **NO RESET**
- AP favors DEFENSE → throw-in in FRONTCOURT → Reset to 35 seconds
- AP favors **DEFENSE** → throw-in in **BACKCOURT** → **Reset to 35 seconds**

After a Shot/Free Throw That Hits the Rim (No Team Control — Loose Ball)

- AP favors OFFENSE → Reset to 35 seconds
- AP favors **DEFENSE** → **Reset to 35 seconds**

After a Shot/Free Throw That Does NOT Hit the Rim (No Team Control)

- AP favors **OFFENSE** (shooting team) → **NO RESET**
- AP favors **DEFENSE** → **Reset to 35 seconds**

Inadvertent Whistle — No Team Control at Time of Whistle

- Throw-in in frontcourt → Reset to 35 seconds

- Throw-in in **backcourt** → **Reset to 35 seconds**

Inadvertent Whistle — Team Control Existed at Time of Whistle

- **NO RESET**

> ★ **NEW — Lodged Ball (wedged between rim and backboard)**
>
> • AP favors OFFENSE → Reset to 35 seconds
>
> • AP favors DEFENSE → Reset to 35 seconds

SECTION 8 — BACKCOURT RULES

10-Second Backcourt Count

- Officials do **NOT** use a visible 10-second count in the backcourt.
- The **shot clock governs** the 10-second backcourt count.
- **ANY** official may call the 10-second backcourt violation when it occurs.

> ★ **NEW —**
>
> When the ball is knocked out of bounds in the backcourt, the offensive team receives a NEW 10-second period
>
> Example:
> If the shot clock displays :29 at throw-in time, the 10-second violation occurs when the shot clock reaches :19.

5-Second Closely Guarded Count (Frontcourt Only)

- Officials use a **VISIBLE count** to administer the 5-second "hold" situation in the frontcourt when using the shot clock.

SECTION 9 — TIMING ERRORS & MALFUNCTIONS

- Officials make the final determination when there is doubt whether a score was made within the shot clock period, or whether a try for goal contacted the ring or flange.
- When an obvious mistake by the SCO has occurred (failure to start, stop, set, or reset the clock properly), or when a shot clock has malfunctioned, the mistake or result may be corrected **DURING the shot clock period in which it occurred** - only when the official has **definite information** relative to the mistake and the time involved.

- If the shot clock is off because the game clock is 35 seconds or less, or there is a shot clock malfunction, officials MUST use a visible backcourt ten-second count.

QUICK-REFERENCE SUMMARY — RESET INSTRUCTIONS

Tier	Reset To	Triggered By
1	NO RESET	Timeout; player injury; defense deflects ball out of bounds while offense retains possession; double foul with offense retaining possession; inadvertent whistle with team control; AP favors offense on a held ball during team control or after a shot that does not hit the rim.
2	35 seconds	All reset situations listed in Section 6, including defensive fouls and kicked or fisted ball violations; rim contact followed by offensive control; change of team control; defensive rebound; offensive foul or violation; AP awards requiring a reset; lodged ball; opening or overtime jump ball out of bounds before possession; single technical foul.