November 18, 2026

NFHS Basketball Weekly Rule Interpretations

Resuming Play Differences

Rules References: 8-6-4

Purpose:
This rule change that was adopted before the 2026-27 season is intended to establish a clear and consistent standard for administering technical fouls committed during a single dead-ball period. By treating all such fouls during a dead ball as occurring at "approximately the same time," the rule simplifies penalty administration, reduces inconsistencies in interpretation, minimizes the risk of awarding an incorrect number of free throws or granting possession to the wrong team, and promotes more accurate and efficient resumption of play.

Rule Language:
When both teams are assessed technical fouls during the same dead-ball period, including the pre-game warm-up period, or during the dead-ball period following an infraction or stoppage in play and before the ball becomes live:

a. All technical fouls are considered to have been committed at approximately the same time for the purposes of offsetting their penalties.
b. All fouls are charged, and their penalties are identified.
c. When there is an equal number of fouls committed during the dead-ball period, play shall resume at the point of interruption.
d. When there is an unequal number of fouls committed during the dead-ball period, play shall resume as if the last committed non-offsetting single administrative, team, substitute, player, or bench technical foul was the only foul committed.

SITUATION 1: During pregame warm-ups, prior to the opening jump ball, Team A is assessed one administrative technical foul, and Team B is assessed one technical foul for B1 dunking. **RULING:** Because both teams are assessed with an equal number of technical fouls during pregame warm-ups, the penalties are offset. No free throws are awarded. The game shall begin with a jump ball. (8-6-4, 10-1, 10-2, 10-4, 10-5)

SITUATION 2: Before the bonus is in effect, Dribbler A1 is fouled by B1. A1 takes exception to the foul and throws the ball at B1. B-1 retrieves the ball and throws it back at A1. **RULING:** Both A1 and B1 are assessed with unsporting technical fouls. Since the fouls occurred during the same dead-ball period,

they are considered to have occurred at approximately the same time, and the penalties offset. No free throws are awarded, and play is resumed at the point of interruption. (8-6-4)

SITUATION 3: After a traveling violation committed by A1. A1 and B1 get into a verbal confrontation. B2 then pushes A1. **RULING:** During the same dead-ball period equal penalties shall be cancelled. The final penalty determines possession and cancels any prior possession rights. A1 and B1 are each charged with a technical foul. The penalties for these fouls offset. B2 is also charged with a technical foul for the dead ball contact. Team A is awarded with 2 free throws and the ball at the division line for a throw-in.

Conclusion:

This rule is intended to simplify the administration of penalties for technical fouls that occur during all dead ball periods, including pregame warmups. The free throw penalties for technical fouls by opposing teams will now be offset or cancelled when determining the number of free throws to be attempted. When equal penalties are offset, play can be resumed quickly and efficiently at the point of interruption. All other aspects of the technical foul rules remain unchanged, including the charging of team fouls, indirect technical fouls charged to head coaches, and disqualifications and ejections resulting from flagrant technical fouls being assessed.