

Playing-Rules History

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Dr. James Naismith's 13 Original Rules of Basketball



Photo from NCAA archives

1. The ball may be thrown in any direction with one or both hands.
2. The ball may be batted in any direction with one or both hands (never with the fist).
3. A player cannot run with the ball. The player must throw it from the spot on which he catches it, allowance to be made for a man who catches the ball when running at a good speed if he tries to stop.
4. The ball must be held in or between the hands; the arms or body must not be used for holding it.
5. No shouldering, holding, pushing, tripping, or striking in any way the person of an opponent shall be allowed; the first infringement of this rule by any player shall count as a foul, the second shall disqualify him until the next goal is made, or, if there was evident intent to injure the person, for the whole of the game, no substitute allowed.
6. A foul is striking at the ball with the fist, violation of Rules 3, 4, and such as described in Rule 5.
7. If either side makes three consecutive fouls, it shall count a goal for the opponents (consecutive means without the opponents in the mean time making a foul).
8. A goal shall be made when the ball is thrown or batted from the grounds into the basket and stays there, providing those defending the goal do not touch or disturb the goal. If the ball rests on the edges, and the opponent moves the basket, it shall count as a goal.
9. When the ball goes out of bounds, it shall be thrown into the field of play by the person first touching it. In case of a dispute, the umpire shall throw it straight into the field. The thrower-in is allowed five seconds; if he holds it longer, it shall go to the opponent. If any side persists in delaying the game, the umpire shall call a foul on that side.
10. The umpire shall be judge of the men and shall note the fouls and notify the referee when three consecutive fouls have been made. He shall have power to disqualify men according to Rule 5.
11. The referee shall be judge of the ball and shall decide when the ball is in play, in bounds, to which side it belongs, and shall keep the time. He shall decide when a goal has been made, and keep account of the goals with any other duties that are usually performed by a referee.
12. The time shall be two 15-minute halves, with five minutes' rest between.
13. The side making the most goals in that time shall be declared the winner. In case of a draw, the game may, by agreement of the captains, be continued until another goal is made.

Note: These original rules were published in January 1892 in the Springfield College school newspaper, The Triangle.

Important Rules Changes

1891-92

- The 13 original rules of basketball are written by Dr. James Naismith in December 1891 in Springfield, Massachusetts.

1894-95

- The free-throw line is moved from 20 to 15 feet.

1895-96

- A field goal changes from three to two points, and free throws from three points to one point.

1896-97

- Backboards are installed.

1900-01

- A dribbler may not shoot for a field goal and may dribble only once, and then with two hands.

1908-09

- A dribbler is permitted to shoot. The dribble is defined as the "continuous passage of the ball," making the double dribble illegal.
- A second official is added for games in an effort to curb the rough play.

1910-11

- Players are disqualified upon committing their fourth personal foul.
- No coaching is allowed during the progress of the game by anybody connected with either team. A warning is given for the first violation and a free throw is awarded after that.

1913-14

- The bottom of the net is left open.

1914-15

- College, YMCA and AAU rules are made the same.

1920-21

- A player can re-enter the game once. Before this rule, if a player left the game, he could not re-enter for the rest of the game.
- The backboards are moved two feet from the wall of the court. Before this rule, players would "climb" the padded wall to sink baskets.

1921-22

- Running with the ball changes from a foul to a violation.

1923-24

- The player fouled must shoot his own free throws. Before this rule, one person usually shot all his team's free throws.

1928-29

- The charging foul by the dribbler is introduced.

1930-31

- A held ball may be called when a closely guarded player is withholding the ball from play for five seconds. The result will be a jump ball.
- The maximum circumference of the ball is reduced from 32 to 31 inches, and the maximum weight from 23 to 22 ounces.

1932-33

- The 10-second center (division) line is introduced to reduce stalling.
- No player can stand in the free-throw lane with the ball more than three seconds.

1933-34

- A player may re-enter the game twice.

1934-35

- The circumference of the ball again is reduced to between 29½ and 30¼ inches.

1935-36

- No offensive player can remain in the free-throw lane, with or without the ball, for more than three seconds.
- After a made free throw, the team scored upon shall put the ball in play at the end of the court where the goal had been scored.

1937-38

- The center jump after every goal scored is eliminated.

1938-39

- The ball will be thrown in from out of bounds at mid-court by the team shooting a free throw after a technical foul. Before, the ball was put into play with a center jump after a technical-foul free throw.
- The circumference of the ball is established as 30 inches.

1939-40

- Teams have the choice of whether to take a free throw or take the ball out of bounds at mid-court. If two or more free throws are awarded, this option applies to the last throw.
- The backboards are moved from two to four feet from the end line to permit freer movement under the basket.

1940-41

- Fan-shaped backboards are made legal.

1942-43

- Any player who is eligible to start an overtime period will be allowed an extra personal foul, increasing the total so disqualification is on the fifth foul.

1944-45

- Defensive goaltending is banned.
- Five personal fouls disqualify a player. An extra foul is not permitted in overtime games.
- Unlimited substitution is introduced.
- It becomes a violation for an offensive player to remain in the free-throw lane more than three seconds.

1946-47

- Transparent backboards are authorized.

1947-48

- The clock is stopped on every dead ball the last three minutes of the second half and of every overtime period. This includes every time a goal is scored because the ball is considered dead until put into play again. (This rule was abolished in 1951.)

1948-49

- Coaches are allowed to speak to players during a timeout.

1951-52

- Games are to be played in four 10-minute quarters. Before this, games were played in two 20-minute halves.

1952-53

- Teams can no longer waive free throws in favor of taking the ball out of bounds.
- The one-and-one free-throw rule is introduced, although the bonus is used only if the first shot is missed. The rule will be in effect the entire game except the last three minutes, when every foul is two shots.

1954-55

- The one-and-one free throw is changed so that the bonus shot is given only if the first shot is made.
- Games are changed back to being played in two 20-minute halves.

1955-56

- The two-shot penalty in the last three minutes of the game is eliminated. The one-and-one is now in effect the entire game.

1956-57

- The free-throw lane is increased from six feet to 12 feet. On the lineup for a free throw, the two spaces adjacent to the end line must be occupied by opponents of the free thrower. In the past, one space was marked "H" for a home team player to occupy, and across the lane the first space was marked "V" for a visiting team player to stand in.
- Grasping the basket is now classified as a technical foul under unsportsmanlike tactics.

1957-58

- Offensive goaltending is now banned, as an addition to the original 1945 rule.
- One free throw for each common foul is taken for the first six personal fouls by one team in each half, and the one-and-one is used thereafter.

- On uniforms, the use of the single digit numbers one and two and any digit greater than five is prohibited.
- A ball that passes over the backboard—either front to back or back to front—is considered out of bounds.

1964-65

- Coaches must remain seated on the bench except while the clock is stopped or to direct or encourage players on the court. This rule is to help keep coaches from inciting undesirable crowd reactions toward the officials.

1967-68

- The dunk is made illegal during the game and pregame warm-up.

1970-71

- During a jump ball, a nonjumper may not change his position from the time the official is ready to make the toss until after the ball has been touched.

1972-73

- The free throw on the first six common fouls each half by a team is eliminated.
- Players cannot attempt to create the false impression that they have been fouled in charging-guarding situations or while screening when the contact was only incidental. An official can charge the "actor" with a technical foul for unsportsmanlike conduct if, in the official's opinion, the actor is making a travesty of the game.
- Freshmen are eligible to play varsity basketball. This was the result of a change in the NCAA bylaws, not the basketball playing rules.

1973-74

- Officials may now penalize players for fouls occurring away from the ball, such as grabbing, holding and setting illegal screens.

1974-75

- During a jump ball, a nonjumper on the restraining circle may move around it after the ball has left the official's hands.
- A player charged with a foul is no longer required to raise his hand. (In 1978, however, it was strongly recommended that a player start raising his hand again.)

1976-77

- The dunk is made legal again.

1981-82

- The jump ball is used only at the beginning of the game and the start of each overtime. An alternating arrow will indicate possession in jump-ball situations during the game.
- All fouls charged to bench personnel shall be assessed to the head coach.

1982-83

- When the closely guarded five-second count is reached, it is no longer a jump-ball situation. It is a violation, and the ball is awarded to the defensive team out of bounds.

1983-84

- Two free throws are taken for each common foul committed within the last two minutes of the second half and the entire overtime period, if the bonus rule is in effect. (This rule was rescinded one month into the season.)

1984-85

- The coaching box is introduced, whereby a coach and all bench personnel must remain in the 28-foot-long coaching box unless seeking information from the scorer's table.

1985-86

- The 45-second clock is introduced. The team in control of the ball must now shoot for a goal within 45 seconds after it attains team control.
- If a shooter is fouled intentionally and the shot is missed, the penalty will be two shots and possession of the ball out of bounds to the team that was fouled.
- The head coach may stand throughout the game, while all other bench personnel must remain seated.

1986-87

- The three-point field goal is introduced and set at 19 feet 9 inches from the center of the basket.
- A coach may leave the confines of the bench at any time without penalty to correct a scorer's or timer's mistake. A technical foul is assessed if there is no mistake. (This was changed the next year to a timeout.) Also, a television replay may be used to prevent or rectify a scorer's or timer's mistake or a malfunction of the clock.

1987-88

- Each intentional personal foul carries a two-shot penalty plus possession of the ball.

1988-89

- Any squad member who participates in a fight will be ejected from the game and will be placed on probation. If that player participates in a second fight during the season, he will be suspended for one game. A third fight involving the same person results in suspension for the rest of the season including championship competition.

1990-91

- Beginning with the team's 10th personal foul in a half, two free throws are awarded for each common foul, except player-control fouls.
- Three free throws are awarded when a shooter is fouled during an unsuccessful three-point try.
- The fighting rule is amended. The first time any squad member or bench personnel participates in a fight he will be suspended for the team's next game. If that same person participates in a second fight, he will be suspended for the rest of the season, including championship competition.

1991-92

- Contact technical fouls count toward the five fouls for player disqualification and toward the team fouls in reaching bonus free-throw situations.
- The shot clock is reset when the ball strikes the basket ring, not when a shot leaves the shooter's hands as it had been ever since the rule was introduced in 1986.

1992-93

- Unsporting technical fouls, in addition to contact technical fouls, count toward the five fouls for player disqualification and toward the team fouls in reaching bonus free-throw situations.

1993-94

- The shot clock is reduced to 35 seconds from 45. The team in control of the ball must shoot for a goal within 35 seconds after it gains team control.
- A foul shall be ruled intentional if, while playing the ball, a player causes excessive contact with an opponent.
- The game clock will be stopped after successful field goals in the last minute of the game and the last minute of any overtime period with no substitution allowed.
- The five-second dribbling violation when closely guarded is eliminated.
- The rule concerning the use of profanity is expanded to include abusive and obscene language in an effort to curtail verbal misconduct by players and coaches.

1994-95

- The inner circle at mid-court is eliminated.
- Scoring is restricted to a tap-in when three-tenths (.3) of a second or less remain on the game clock or shot clock.
- The fighting and suspension rules are expanded to include coaches and team personnel.

1995-96

- All unsporting technical fouls charged to anyone on the bench count toward the team foul total.
- Teams are allowed one 20-second timeout per half. This was an experimental rule in the 1994-95 season.

1996-97

- Teams shall warm up and shoot at the end of the court farthest from their own bench for the first half. Previously, teams had the choice of baskets in the first half.
- In games not involving commercial electronic media, teams are entitled to four full-length timeouts and two 20-second timeouts per game. In games involving commercial electronic media, teams are entitled to two full-length timeouts and three 20-second timeouts per game.

1997-98

- The five-second dribbling violation when closely guarded is reinstated.
- Timeout requests can be made by a player on the court or by the head coach.

1998-99

- In a held-ball situation initiated by the defense, the ball shall be awarded to the defensive team. Previously, possession was awarded by the direction of the possession arrow.

1999-00

- Held-ball change from previous season rescinded.
- Twenty-second timeouts increased to 30 seconds in length. New electronic media timeout format adopted.
- Uniform numbers one and two are permitted.

2000-01

- Number of players permitted on free-throw lane reduced from eight to six.

Division I Basketball Firsts

The First Time...

Playing rules were published:

January 1892 in the Springfield College school newspaper, *The Triangle*.

A game was played:

January 20, 1892, at the Training School of the International YMCA College, now known as Springfield College in Massachusetts.

A game was played in public:

March 11, 1892, at Springfield College. A crowd of 200 saw the students defeat the teachers, 5-1.

A full schedule of games was played by a college:

1894 when the University of Chicago compiled a 6-1 season record.

A game between two colleges was played:

February 9, 1895, when the Minnesota School of Agriculture defeated Hamline, 9-3. Nine players were allowed on the court at the same time for both teams.

A game between two colleges was played with five players on each team:

January 16, 1896, when Chicago defeated Iowa, 15-12, in Iowa City. Iowa's starting lineup was composed of a YMCA team that just happened to be university students.

A game between two true college teams with five players on a team was played:

1897 when Yale defeated Pennsylvania, 32-10.

A conference season was played:

1901-02 by the East League, known today as the Ivy Group.

A conference tournament was played:

1921 by the Southern Conference. Kentucky was the winner.

A consensus all-America team was selected:

1929. Members were Charley Hyatt, Pittsburgh; Joe Schaaf, Pennsylvania; Charles Murphy, Purdue; Vern Corbin, California; Thomas Churchill, Oklahoma; and John Thompson, Montana State.

The National Invitation Tournament was played:

1938 when Temple was the winner.

A college game was televised:

February 28, 1940, when Pittsburgh defeated Fordham, 50-37, at Madison Square Garden in New York City. In the second game, New York University defeated Georgetown, 50-27.

The three-point shot was used experimentally in a game:

February 7, 1945, Columbia defeated Fordham, 73-58. The three-point line was set at 21 feet from the basket and Columbia scored 11 "long goals" to Fordham's nine. Also, free throwers had an option to take their shots from the regular 15-foot distance for one point or from 21 feet for two points. Eight "long fouls" were made during the game.

The 12-foot free-throw lane was used experimentally in a game:

February 7, 1945, Columbia defeated Fordham, 73-58 in the same game as mentioned above. The free-throw lane was widened from six feet to 12 for this game and the rule was adopted 11 years later.

An Associated Press poll was published:

1949, when St. Louis was ranked No. 1. By the end of the season, Kentucky had taken over the top spot.

NCAA Tournament Firsts

The first game:

March 17, 1939, when Villanova defeated Brown, 42-30, in Philadelphia.

The first championship game:

March 27, 1939, when Oregon defeated Ohio State, 46-33, in Evanston, Illinois.

The first time two teams from the same conference played in the NCAA tournament:

1944 when Iowa State and Missouri, both of the Big Six, played in the Western regional.

The first time four teams advanced to the final site:

1946 (North Carolina, Ohio State, Oklahoma State and California).

The first championship game televised:

1946 locally in New York City by WCBS-TV. Oklahoma State defeated North Carolina, 43-40. An estimated 500,000 watched the game on television.

The first repeat champion:

Oklahoma State followed its 1945 championship with a title in 1946.

First NCAA championship team to have an integrated roster of white and black players:

CCNY's 1950 squad is believed to be the first integrated championship team.

The first time conference champions qualified automatically:

1951.

The first time a conference champion qualified automatically for the NCAA tournament instead of the regular-season champion:

1952, North Carolina State finished second in the Southern Conference but won the conference postseason tournament.

The first time there were four regional sites:

1952.

The first time games were televised regionally:

1952.

The first time a Final Four was played on Friday and Saturday:

1954.

The first tournament championship game televised nationally:

1954 for a broadcast rights fee of \$7,500.

The first time an undefeated team won the NCAA championship:

1956 when San Francisco went 29-0.

The first time two teams from the same state played in the NCAA title game:

1961 when Cincinnati defeated Ohio State, 70-65, in overtime.

The first championship team to start five African-Americans:

UTEP in 1966—Harry Flournoy, David Lattin, Bobby Joe Hill, Orsten Artis, Willie Cager.

The first time the Final Four was played on Thursday and Saturday:

1969.

The first time the Final Four was played on Saturday and Monday:

1973.

The first NCAA title game televised during prime time:

UCLA's win over Memphis in 1973 was televised by NBC.

The first time television rights totaled more than \$1 million:

1973.

The first public draw for Final Four tickets:

1973 for the 1974 championship.

The first time teams other than the conference champion could be chosen at large from the same conference:

1975.

The first reference to the term "Final Four":

1975 Official Collegiate Basketball Guide, page 5 in national preview-review section written by Ed Chay of the Cleveland Plain Dealer. Chay wrote, "Outspoken Al McGuire of Marquette, whose team was one of the final four in Greensboro, was among several coaches who said it was good for college basketball that UCLA was finally beaten."

The first time two teams from the same conference played in the Final Four title game:

1976 when Indiana defeated Michigan, 86-68. Both teams were Big Ten members.

The first time the seeding process was used to align teams in the bracket:

1978.

The first reference to term "Final Four" is capitalized:

1978 Official Collegiate Basketball Guide (page 7, first line).

The first time all teams were seeded in the bracket:

1979.

The first public lottery for Final Four tickets:

1979.

The first time more than two teams from the same conference were allowed in the NCAA tournament:

1980.

The first time none of the No. 1 seeds in the NCAA tournament advanced to the Final Four:

1980.

The first time the Ratings Percentage Index (RPI), a computer ranking system, was used as an aid in evaluating teams for at-large selections and seeding:

1981.

The first time two No. 1 seeds in the NCAA tournament advanced to the Final Four:

1981.

The first live television broadcast of the selection show announcing the NCAA tournament bracket:

1982.

The first time CBS was awarded the television rights for the NCAA tournament:

1982.

The first time a men's and women's team from the same school advanced to the Final Four in the same year:

1983, when both Georgia teams lost in the national semifinals.

The first time awards were presented to all participating teams in the NCAA championship tournament:

1984.

The first time 64 teams participated in the NCAA tournament:

1985.

The first time three teams from the same conference advanced to the Final Four:

1985, when Georgetown, St. John's (New York) and Villanova represented the Big East.

The first time all 64 NCAA tournament teams were subject to drug testing:

1987.

The first time neutral courts were used in all rounds of the NCAA tournament:

1989.

The first time all the Nos. 1 and 2 seeds in the NCAA tournament advanced to the Sweet Sixteen:

1989.

The first time a bearded coach advanced to the Final Four:

P.J. Carlesimo of Seton Hall in 1989.

The first time a minimum facility seating capacity of 12,000 for first and second rounds and regionals was established:

1993.

The first time three No. 1 seeds in the NCAA tournament advanced to the Final Four:

1993.

The first time two former Final Four most outstanding players returned to the Final Four:

1995, when North Carolina's Donald Williams (1993) and Arkansas' Cortliss Williamson (1994) returned to the Final Four.

The first NCAA tournament MOP:

Marv Huffman of Indiana in 1940.

The first freshman named NCAA tournament MOP:

Arnie Ferrin of Utah in 1944.

The first two-time NCAA tournament MOP:

Bob Kurland of Oklahoma State in 1945 and 1946.

The first NCAA tournament MOP not to play on the national championship team:

B.H. Born of Kansas in 1953.

The first football Heisman Trophy winner to play in the Final Four:

Terry Baker of Oregon State in 1963.

The first three-time NCAA tournament MOP:

Lew Alcindor of UCLA in 1967, 1968 and 1969.

The first player to play for two teams in the Final Four championship game:

Bob Bender with Indiana 1976 and Duke 1978.

The first coach to win the NCAA title in his first year as a head coach:

Steve Fisher of Michigan in 1989.

The First Team(s)...

To win 30 games in a season:

Wyoming went 31-2 in 1943.

To win a football bowl game and the NCAA tournament title in the same academic year:

Oklahoma State won the Cotton Bowl and the NCAA championship in 1944-45.

To be ranked No. 1 in the final regular-season poll and go on to win the NCAA championship:

Kentucky ended the 1949 regular season ranked No. 1 and proceeded to win its second NCAA title.

To win the NCAA tournament and the NIT in the same year:

CCNY won both tournaments in 1950.

To play for the national championship in both football and basketball in the same academic year:

Oklahoma lost in both the Orange Bowl and the Final Four title game in 1987-88.

Representing the same school to be ranked No. 1 in the men's and women's polls:

Connecticut's men's and women's basketball programs were ranked No. 1 in their respective top 25 polls February 13, 1995.

The First Coach...

Who also happened to be the inventor of the game:

Dr. James Naismith invented the game in December 1891 at Springfield College in Massachusetts.

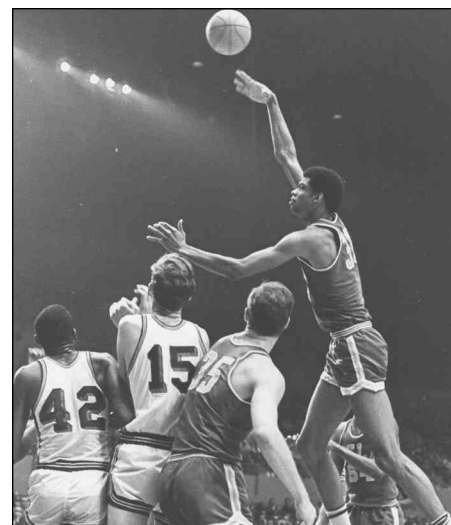
To lead his team to a finish among the final four teams in the nation in his first season as a head coach:

Ray Meyer of DePaul in 1943.

To be recognized as coach of the year:

Phil Woolpert of San Francisco was named the 1955 coach of the year by United Press International.

To take two different schools to the NCAA championship game:



UCLA's Lew Alcindor was a three-time most outstanding player of the NCAA tournament.

Frank McGuire in 1957 with North Carolina after St. John's (New York) in 1952.

To win the NCAA championship after playing for an NCAA championship team:

Bob Knight coached Indiana to the championship in 1976 after playing for the 1960 Ohio State champions.

To take two different teams to the Final Four:

Forddy Anderson and Frank McGuire. Anderson—Bradley in 1950 (first year) and Michigan State in 1957; McGuire—St. John's (New York) (first year) in 1952 and North Carolina in 1957.

To take two different teams to the NCAA tournament:

Ben Carnevale—North Carolina in 1946 (first year) and Navy in 1947.

To take three different teams to the NCAA tournament:

Eddie Hickey—Creighton in 1941 (first year), Saint Louis in 1952 and Marquette in 1959.

To take four different teams to the NCAA tournament:

Eddie Sutton—Creighton in 1974 (first year), Arkansas in 1977, Kentucky in 1986 and Oklahoma State in 1991.

The First Player...

To be named consensus all-American three times:

John Wooden of Purdue from 1930-32.

To score 1,000 points in his career:

Christian Steinmetz of Wisconsin from 1903-05.

To score 50 points in one game:

Hank Luisetti of Stanford, who scored 50 in a win over Duquesne, January 1, 1938.

To popularize the jump shot:

Hank Luisetti of Stanford in 1936-38.

African-American to be named to the consensus all-America team:

Don Barksdale of UCLA in 1947.

To score 2,000 points in his career:

Jim Lacy of Loyola (Md.) scored 2,154 points in 1946-49.

To lead the nation in scoring during the regular season and play for the NCAA championship team in the same year:

Clyde Lovellette of Kansas in 1952.

To grab 50 rebounds in one game:

Bill Chambers of William and Mary brought down 51 boards against Virginia on February 14, 1953.

To grab 700 rebounds in a season:

Walt Dukes of Seton Hall brought down 734 boards during the 1953 season.

To score 100 points in a game:

Frank Selvy of Furman scored 100 points in a 149-95 victory over Newberry on February 13, 1954, in Greenville, South Carolina.

To score 1,000 points in a single season:

Frank Selvy of Furman scored 1,209 during the 1954 season.

To average 40 points a game for a season:

Frank Selvy of Furman averaged 41.7 points a game during the 1954 season.

To average 30 points a game for a career:

Frank Selvy of Furman averaged 32.5 points a game from 1952-54.

To average more than 20 points and 20 rebounds per game during his career:

Bill Russell of San Francisco from 1954-56. He averaged 20.7 points and 20.3 rebounds.

Recognized as the player of the year:

Tom Gola of La Salle was named the 1955 player of the year by United Press International.

To score 3,000 points in his career:

Pete Maravich of LSU scored 3,667 points from 1968-70.

To average 40 points a game for a career:

Pete Maravich of LSU averaged 44.2 points a game from 1968-70.

To lead the nation in scoring and rebounding in the same season:

Xavier McDaniel of Wichita State in 1985.

To make 400 three-point field goals in his career:

Doug Day of Radford hit 401 three-pointers from 1990-93.