

# Coaches cry foul over physical play

Changes in the NCAA include cutting down on hand-checking and rough play in the post.  
BY JOSHUA CAMENZIND

Big 12 basketball coaches dabbled in every color of the rainbow when giving their opinions on the limiting of physical play in the conference and around the country this season.

The guidelines, which emphasize cutting down on hand-checking and rough play in the post, were praised by some, scoffed at by others and disregarded as non-factors by a few during the Big 12's first weekly teleconference of the season.

As expected, Kansas Coach Roy Williams, who headed the NCAA Rules Committee, was optimistic about the prospects the changes have in store for the future of basketball.

"I hope the officials will stick to it," said Williams, who said he has already had five or six players foul out of games this season. "As players and coaches, we have to change."

"The whole story will be how the officials stick to it in conference play and on a consistent basis."

The rule changes received a thumbs up from Williams, Texas Tech Coach James Dickey and Iowa State Coach Larry Eustachy.

Negative responses came from Texas A&M Coach Melvin Watkins and Baylor Coach Dave Bliss, while Missouri's Quin Snyder, Kansas State's Jim Woolridge and Nebraska's Barry Collier all sat on the fence, wishing not to teeter on either side of the issue.

Watkins, who had five players foul out against Virginia Commonwealth, was left asking where the good old days have gone.

"You would come away from some calls scratching your head and asking, 'Where did that come from?'" Watkins said.

Bliss said he had seen a differ-

*"I thought what we were going to see early was a foul-fest - a free-throw contest."*

**Jim Woolridge**  
Kansas State coach

ence in the way officials had officiated his team's games this season.

"It's been very erratic to date," Bliss said. "Any time there is an emphasis to change, sometimes there is a knee-jerk overreaction and I think we have witnessed a lot of that."

But some coaches, including Snyder, Woolridge and Dickey, believe games have been called consistently.

Dickey said once Big 12 play begins, all of this talk of change would fade away and physical play would take over again.

"I have not seen a drastic change," Dickey said. "Officials are making calls early, which helps teams adjust."

"I don't think that you are going to see conference games called as closely as you do non-conference. That has never been my experience."

Collier said NU's games were called tight in the beginning, but had loosened up recently, with only nine fouls being called against the Huskers in their 52-51 loss at Pittsburgh.

KSU's Woolridge said he had been surprised at how the changes had played out to this point.

"I thought what we were going to see early was a foul-fest - a free throw contest," he said. "I don't think the game is being played any different, and I don't think the game is being called drastically different either."

But Eustachy and Snyder both spoke up about one aspect of the game they believed needed to be defined better - post play.

"I still don't know how you can defend on the post," Snyder



DN File Photo

Kimani Friend and the physical Cornhuskers have had to tone down the elbows and forearms while on defense this season. The NCAA rules committee is cracking down on physical play, a point of contention for some of the Big 12's coaches.

said. "It just seems like you have guys standing there like dead soldiers, hoping that people miss."

"You almost have a charge-block call every time."

Said Eustachy: "In theory, if a guy gets the basketball with his back to the basket in the low post, you are not allowed to impede his progress. In theory, you can just take the ball and back your way down to the basket and he has to regress, according to how I hear it, and just drop it into the basket."

Woolridge said the discrepancy in coaches' opinions on the matter came from different Big 12 teams seeing a wide array of officials.

"I would have to say that you have three officials call a game in Kansas State, three officials call a game at Texas and three others call it at Missouri," Woolridge said. "That's nine different guys with nine different opinions of interpretation."

"That is very hard to streamline into efficiency."

In the search for consistency, the Big 12 coaches have chose to have varying opinions on the matter - something Williams said could be eliminated.

"If you could get your own personal feelings and own feelings that it could help your team out and think about it just helping college basketball, then support would be unanimous with all the coaches," Williams said.

**Big 12 Notes:**  
It was a week for the Maurices in the Big 12 last week with Maurice Baker of Oklahoma State being named the conference player of the week and Maurice Evans of Texas grabbing the conference rookie honor.

Baker scored 47 points combined in wins over North Texas and UNLV, while Evans scored 44 points in wins over Texas-San Antonio and Southwest Texas State.

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# Davison's career highlights talent

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That being said, focus for Nebraska fans instinctively shifts to Nov. 28, 1997, nine games into his Husker career. Davison provided the dramatic diving catch off a Shevin Wiggins deflection, helping spark NU to a 45-38 win at Missouri.

That will undeniably be the legacy that overshadows the other accomplishments in his 48 other games at Nebraska. How Davison views the play four years later displays the desire that has fueled him to be one of the best receivers in NU history.

"The thing about it with a guy like me is it's never enough," he said. "You can wait forever for a play like that, and it would be hard to ever top it. And it was still never enough to fulfill me athletically."

Such statements prove there is much, much more to Mr. Consistent than just "the catch." Just ask his friends.

"He'll be the first one to tell you that," Crouch said. "That was just a stepping stone for

*"I think they'll look at me as a consistent player that worked hard every day and got the most out of what he was blessed with. I think I've done that."*

**Matt Davison**  
NU receiver

him in his career, and it really helped him. He's made a lot of big catches in a lot of big games."

A lot of those were probably driven by Davison's insatiable desire to be the best he can.

"That play was motivation for me to make people forget just that one play," he said. "Hopefully I've done some things that people can remember me for besides that."

Come Dec. 30 and stage left at the Alamodome, it shouldn't be a problem.

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