

30 Tips...

To Impress the Basketball Coach

by Mike Mastandrea

The following is a “cram course” highlighting basketball history, play of the game, and rules and regulations. The next time you meet with the basketball coach, impress him/her with your “interest and knowledge” of the game. Who knows? Your team may be awarded more “court-time” to practice and perform.



1. Basketball was invented by Dr. James Naismith in 1891 at Springfield, College in Massachusetts.
2. The first basketball hoops used were “bottomed-out” peach baskets.
3. The basketball court is 94'x 50' rectangle divided in two equal parts by the “half-court line.”
4. Five players for each team are on the court during the game:
2 Forwards, 2 Guards, and a Center.
5. Although all of the players are usually tall, the center is traditionally the tallest player on the team. The center is used for blocking shots near the basket and getting rebounds (ball shot at the goal which do not go through the hoop).
6. The home team players usually wear the lighter colored uniforms and the visiting team wears the colored uniforms.
7. There are 2-3 officials or referees that oversee a high school basketball game depending upon the population size of the schools playing. Decisions by the referees are always final.
8. At the high school level, the game is divided into four (4) 8 minute quarters.
9. There are 5 time outs during the game lasting a total of 4 minutes—(2) 60 second time outs and (3) 20 second timeouts.
10. After the second quarter, like football, is a 15 minute half-time intermission. This might be shortened or extended to accommodate special occasions or ceremonies.
11. The object of the game is simple: put the ball through the hoop for your team and prevent the other team from shooting the ball through the hoop.
12. You score in basketball in only 2 ways: shooting baskets or making “free throws”. Baskets count 2 or 3 points (depending upon the distance they are shot from the basket). Free throws count 1 point each.
13. Long-range baskets from at least 20 feet from the goal count 3 points each. Players and fans often refer to these baskets as being shot from “downtown”.
14. Free throws are awarded a player who has been “fouled” by a player from the opposing team. Fouls usually involve illegal body contact such as tripping, pushing, holding, or blocking.
15. Technical fouls are called by the referees for various reasons which include: foul language by players, fighting, coaches yelling at the officials or using foul language, and other displays of unsportsmanlike conduct.
16. Other rule infractions not involving body contact are kicking the ball, bouncing the ball with both hand simultaneously (double dribbling), traveling, substituting players illegally like during play and not during a time out, etc. These violations turn the ball over to the opposing team.
17. Each player on a basketball team may commit 4 fouls and still remain in the game. Upon committing the 5th foul, that player is ejected from the game and may not return.
18. Just like football, basketball teams play offense and defense. They are on offense when possessing the ball and defense when the other team has the ball.
19. The best ball handlers and shooters on the team are usually the two guards. The point guard directs the offense like the quarterback of a football team.



-
-
20. The forwards are usually needed to make driving shots toward the basket and to rebound the basketball after missed shots.
 21. The most common defensive strategies used by teams are “man to man” or “zone”. In the zone defense, players cover a certain area of the court and try to prevent the opposing team from getting “shots” in their areas.
 22. On offense, the team with the ball tries to run plays they have “drawn up” and executed during practice. These are designed to get players open (unguarded) for good “looks” or shots at the baskets. “Pick and roll” and “screens” are both basketball strategies used to get players open. They are not items found around the house or on menus.
 23. If the game is tied at the end of regulation (32 minutes of play), a 5 minute overtime period is played to determine a winner and each team is given an additional time out. If the game is still tied, another 5 minute overtime period is played. Hence the term “double-overtime”.
 24. Unlike college and the pros, high school basketball does not use a 24-35 second clock. This means that high school teams have as long as they want to shoot the ball on offense as long as they have the ball in play on their opponent’s half of the court within 10 seconds of in-bounding the ball following a basket or turnover. Without the shot clock, the tempo of the game can be slowed considerably.
 25. After a team has accumulated 6 fouls during a half, the opposing team is awarded an opportunity for a bonus foul shot if the player makes his first foul shot. This is called being in the one-and-one situation. Once a team commits 10 fouls in a half, the opposing team is awarded a bonus shot regardless if they make the first foul shot or not.
 26. Since the game clock stops after fouls are committed, a team that is behind is likely to intentionally foul opposing players during the last 2 minutes of the game if the score is close and they need the ball quickly to take shots and “catch up”. This is especially true if such a foul will not put the opposing team in the one-and-one situation. If fouling does give the player the extra bonus shot, the strategy is to foul the player who has the worst percentage of making “free throws” or foul shots.
 27. A horn is used to signal the end of each quarter and to notify the referees that a coach wants to substitute a player/s during the game.
 28. Because time outs in basketball are so brief, there is only time to perform routines on the gym floor before the game begins or during half-time.
 29. Unlike high school football, basketball players are eligible to be drafted by the professional teams in the NBA at the age of 18. Many more high school seniors are entering the professional draft right out of high school instead of playing at the college level.

If you still need more “buzz” words and basketball “lingo” to demonstrate your understanding of the game, trying using the following terms in your next basketball conversation:

- a) Air ball: a badly missed shot at the basket that does not hit the rim or the backboard.
- b) Dunk: a shot that is slammed through the basket from above the rim.
- c) Goaltending: an illegal block of the basketball by a defender. This occurs when the ball is descending toward the basket or is touch directly above the rim. The shooting team is automatically awarded 2 points.
- d) One-and-one: After a team has committed 6 fouls, the other team players are awarded a bonus free throw shot if they make the first foul shot.
- e) Screen: A move in which a an offensive player positions his body in such a way to prevent a defender from getting by him so that another player on offense may take an unimpeded shot at the basket.

