



December 3, 2025

NFHS Basketball Weekly Rule Interpretations

Rule Reference: 9-2-12 & 9-3-4 (NEW) – Thrower Returning Inbounds

Purpose

The purpose of this interpretation is to clarify the new rule addressing throwers who purposely and/or deceitfully delay returning inbounds after legally being out of bounds and then become the first to touch the ball upon re-entering the court.

Beginning in 2025, this action is treated as a violation instead of a technical foul. This change:

- Reduces severity: Shifts from a technical foul (which carried harsher consequences) to a violation, aligning with similar out-of-bounds provisions.
- Encourages consistency: Officials can more uniformly enforce the rule across varying situations.
- Prevents unfair advantage: Eliminates deceptive tactics used by throwers to delay and then re-enter in a way that disrupts fair play.

Rule Language

9-2-12 & 9-3-4 (NEW):

“A thrower who purposely and/or deceitfully delays returning inbounds after legally being out of bounds and then becomes the first player to touch the ball upon re-entering the court commits a violation. This was previously penalized as a technical foul.”

Interpretation

- A thrower who is out of bounds legally during a throw-in must re-enter the court promptly.
- If the thrower intentionally delays re-entry and then becomes the first to touch the ball, it is now ruled a violation .
- This aligns with other rules regarding out-of-bounds players, removing the harsher penalty of a technical foul.

Game Scenario

During a throw-in, A1 is legally out of bounds to complete the throw-in. After releasing the ball, A1 deliberately delays re-entry to allow a screen to develop and then quickly steps back onto the court to catch a return pass, becoming the first player to touch the ball. This action is ruled a violation. The ball is awarded to Team B at one of the four designated spots nearest to where the violation occurred. **RULING:** Correct Procedure

COMMENT

- Under prior rules, this would have resulted in a technical foul against Team A.

- The updated rule ensures the action is penalized but with the appropriate severity of a violation, promoting more consistent enforcement.
- The intent is to stop deceptive re-entry tactics while keeping the penalty proportional to the infraction.

Points of Emphasis for Officials and Coaches

- This is no longer a technical foul; it is a violation.
- Officials should be alert for players attempting to delay or deceive during re-entry after a throw-in.
- Coaches must instruct players that re-entry must be immediate and legal.
- The penalty: Opponents are awarded the ball at one of the four designated spots nearest the violation.