

There are certain calls made in a basketball game that are accepted as reality, when in fact they aren't at all. The truth is, some of the most common truths about the rules of basketball actually aren't true at all.

Need proof? No problem.

Here are ten myths about basketball rules, and the actual truth behind all of them. They'll make you think twice about what you thought you knew.

1. A defensive player must be stationary to take a charge.

Reality: Once a defensive player has obtained a legal guarding position, the defensive player may always move to maintain that guarding position and may even have one or both feet off the floor when contact occurs with the offensive player. Legal guarding position occurs when the defensive player has both feet on the floor and is facing the opponent. This applies to a defensive player who is defending the dribble.

2. A dribble that bounces above the dribbler's head is an illegal dribble violation.

Reality: There is no restriction as to how high a player may bounce the ball, provided the ball does not come to rest in the player's hand.

3. "Reaching in" is a foul.

Reality: Reaching in is not a foul. The term is nowhere to be found in any rulebook. Why? There must be contact to have a foul. The mere act of "reaching in," by itself, is nothing. If contact does occur, it is either a holding foul or a pushing foul.

4. "Over the back" is a foul.

Reality: Similar to the reaching in myth, there must be contact to have a foul. Coaches holler for over the back fouls when their shorter player has seemingly better inside rebounding position and the ball is snared by a taller opponent from behind. Penalize illegal contact; don't penalize a player for being tall.

5. If it looks funny, it must be traveling.

Reality: The traveling rule is one of the most misunderstood in basketball. One of the basic tenets is that a player cannot travel unless that player is holding a live ball. A bobble or fumble is not "control" of the ball, therefore, it cannot be a traveling violation. If you immediately identify the pivot foot when a player receives the ball, you're well on your way to judging traveling correctly.

6. After a player has ended a dribble and fumbled the ball, that player may not recover it without violating.

Reality: A dribble ends when the dribbler catches the ball with one or both hands or simultaneously touches the ball with both hands. A fumble is the accidental loss of player control when the ball unintentionally drops or slips from a player's grasp. It is always legal to recover a fumble. The rules do not penalize clumsiness.

7. Referees should not make calls that decide the outcome of a game.

Reality: Officials do not make calls that decide the outcomes of games. Players commit fouls and violations; officials view those infractions, judge the action and then apply the rules of the game to what they have viewed. The rules then determine the penalty. The officials do not decide the outcome of the game; the players do. If the rule results in the imposition of a penalty that determines the outcome of the game, such is life. Ask yourself this: If you would have called it in the second quarter, why not call it at the end of the game? You are a credit to the game when you are consistent from the opening tip to the final buzzer.

8. Moving Pick or Screen.

Reality: This is another very common phrase, which again doesn't exist in the rules. Again, players are all entitled to a spot on the floor, as long as it isn't already occupied. That means they're allowed to move anywhere on the floor, as long as no illegal contact occurs. If a player can establish a screening position that prevents an opponent from moving directly towards a ball-handler, there is nothing illegal about continuing to move so as to keep the opponent from moving where they want. An Illegal Screen would be called if the Screener's motion or actions cause illegal contact, such as extending a leg into the opponent's path or bumping the opponent.

9. All Contact is a Foul.

Reality: Despite common preconceptions, basketball is a contact sport. Put ten players in a confined area focused on securing one ball, and there will be contact. Fouls only occur when contact is combined with gaining unfair advantage; usually defined as meaning displacing or impeding an opponent.

10. Two Steps Before Shooting.

Reality: This has become a common way for people to try to explain the traveling rules. However, there is no specific number of steps allowed in the rules. At the end of a dribble, traveling occurs if the pivot foot is lifted and returned to the floor. Once the ball-handler stops dribbling, the next foot to touch the floor becomes the pivot foot.