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Hand Checking

Hand checking continues to be a concern and needs to be addressed. Hand checking, if allowed, leads to rough play if not penalized.

Each year the game is being played with more intensity by bigger and stronger players. By rule, a player may not hold an opponent as the rules have no provisions for ignoring contact when a player impedes, pushes, diverts or prevents an opponent from making normal movement on the court.

Players need to understand that placing a hand on the offensive player's body and "steering" them in a different direction is a foul. A defensive player using an "arm bar" against an opponent has committed a foul.

Hand checking is not incidental contact. There are numerous advantages gained by a player that is allowed to use their hands in an excessive manner – quicker starts or stops, stopping/slowing or altering the movement of a player, displacing a player, controlling or anticipating an opponent's next move. These pertain to both offense and defense, on or off the ball.

GUIDELINES

Address these at the beginning of the game and stay consistent throughout.

1. If a player puts a hand on his/her opponent and leaves it there – IT IS A FOUL
2. If a player puts both hands on an opponent – IT IS A FOUL
3. If a player continually "jabs" or "tags" an opponent – IT IS A FOUL
4. If a player uses hands or forearms to guide or direct an opponent – IT IS A FOUL
5. If a defensive player displaces a cutter – IT IS A FOUL
6. In summary: anytime the defense places a hand(s) on an opponent and the opponent's course is altered – IT IS A FOUL. This applies to both offensive and defensive players. Hand checking always creates an advantage.

When officials do not enforce the rules that prohibit hand checking it is a disservice to the game.