

Good morning!

Today's clip.....sort of one of my pet peeves in officiating.....screening. I believe that is an area we can greatly improve our play calling as well as consistency. Take a look at the clip [here](#).

Legal or illegal screen?

I am going out on a limb with this this clip.....I am betting if it were shown at a convention it would be a 'very interesting' discussion! It would be an interesting discussion at halftime with a couple people I work with regularly also! Here is what the rules book gives us about screens:

SECTION 40 SCREEN

ART. 1 . . . A screen is legal action by a player who, while touching the playing court, without causing contact, delays or prevents an opponent from reaching a desired position.

ART. 2 . . . To establish a legal screening position:

- a. The screener may face any direction.
- b. Time and distance are relevant.
- c. The screener shall be stationary, except when both the screener and opponent are moving in the same path and the same direction.

d. The screener shall stay within his/her vertical plane with a stance approximately shoulder width apart.

ART. 3 . . . When screening a stationary opponent from the front or side (within the visual field), the screener may be anywhere short of contact.

ART. 4 . . . When screening a stationary opponent from behind (outside the visual field), the screener shall allow the opponent one normal step backward without contact.

ART. 5 . . . When screening a moving opponent, the screener shall allow the opponent time and distance to avoid contact by stopping or changing direction. The speed of the player to be screened will determine where the screener may take his/her stationary position. The position will vary and may be one to two normal steps or strides from the opponent.

ART. 6 . . . When screening an opponent who is moving in the same path and direction as the screener, the player behind is responsible if contact is made because the player in front slows up or stops and the player behind overruns his/her opponent.

ART. 7 . . . A player who is screened within his/her visual field is expected to avoid contact by going around the screener. In cases of screens outside the visual field, the opponent may make inadvertent contact with the screener and if the opponent is running rapidly, the contact may be severe. Such a case is to be ruled as incidental contact provided the opponent stops or attempts to stop on contact and moves around the screen, and provided the screener is not displaced if he/she has the ball.

ART. 8 . . . A player may not use the arms, hands, hips or shoulders to force his/her way through a screen or to hold the screener and then push the screener aside in order to maintain a guarding position on an opponent.

I think we can all agree that the player being screened is moving. This means that Articles 5 and 7 are in play. This is where our judgement come in. First of all, we need to remember that contact (collisions) on screens 'may be severe'. This one certainly is. THAT is what screens are supposed to do.....legally impede the normal progress of a defender. We just need to make sure that the contact is incidental as in Article 7.

The major judgment for this play is associated with Article 5.....did the screener allow the opponent time and distance to avoid contact...? This is a great play to discuss with a group of people.

The more I look at this play, the more I would have to call a foul. Here is my reasoning: Red 22 is stationary (some would argue that, but let's agree stationary for this explanation). WHEN she is in position to set the screen, how much time and distance are given to the defender to avoid it? If you

pause the clip where the screener is in a stationary position, there is SOME time and distance allowed.....is it 'enough' for her to avoid contact?

Obviously the player being screened did NOT get help from a teammate that the screen was coming. Remember, the contact may be 'severe'. This definitely was. The player being screened did not try to push through the screen, so not foul on her. The ultimate question is whether the screener gave ENOUGH time and distance for contact to be avoided.

The lesson of today is maybe more of KNOWING your reasoning (supported by the rules book) more than anything else. What I mean is that we need to be able to explain why you blew the whistle or did NOT blow the whistle to each coach. We cannot just say 'She was moving' or 'She was stationary' because there is way more to screening than 'moving screens'. If you blow the whistle, you need to be able to say to the red coach 'She was stationary coach, but since the defender was moving, she had to give her enough time and distance to avoid the screen, and that did not happen'. If you do NOT blow the whistle, you need to be able to say to the white coach 'Coach, the screen was stationary and gave your girl enough time and distance to avoid contact. I know it was severe, but screens are set with that outcome possible every time'.

KNOWING the rules gives us a great tool bag to explain a call or no-call to a coach.

Was this a foul? Hm.....YOU make the call!

Have a great day, get a good night's sleep and hope your game goes off as planned tomorrow!

Tim