



December 17, 2025

NFHS Basketball Weekly Rule Interpretations

Rule Reference: Rule 4-49 — Faking Being Fouled

The rule exists to preserve the integrity of the game and protect the credibility of officiating. Players who fake being fouled gain an unfair advantage, place undue influence on officials, and misrepresent legitimate basketball actions. By penalizing such behavior:

- Officials ensure the game is decided by skill and legal play, not deception.
- Coaches and players understand that attempts to manipulate officiating will not be tolerated.
- Consistency is promoted across all levels of play, reinforcing respect for the rules.

For 2025–26, the NFHS has reaffirmed this point of emphasis to ensure renewed focus and consistent adjudication.

Rule Language

Rule 4-49 defines and establishes a procedure for addressing unsporting acts where a player fakes being fouled in an attempt to deceive officials. This includes actions such as:

- Exaggerating or embellishing contact on block/charge plays.
- Simulating impact during a shooting attempt.
- Using movements such as a head bob to create the appearance of illegal contact.

A corresponding official signal (#15) was introduced for enforcement. Faking being fouled results in a team warning on the first occurrence and escalates to a team technical foul if repeated.

Types of Faking Being Fouled

- **Head Bob**
 - Occurs when a player in control of the ball snaps their head back to simulate contact.
 - First infraction: Display signal #15, immediately sound the whistle, and report a team warning. The offending team retains possession and receives a throw-in.
 - Subsequent infractions: Display signal #15, immediately sound whistle, and charge a team technical to the offending team. The opponents are awarded two free throws and the ball at the division line opposite the scorer's table.
- **In the Act of Shooting**
 - Occurs when a shooter falls or exaggerates contact without defensive contact after releasing the ball.
 - First infraction: Display signal #15 displayed, the whistle is withheld, and play is allowed to continue.
 - Play stops when:
 - The try is successful;
 - The defense secures the rebound;
 - The offense rebounds without immediate attempt to score; or

- Another dead ball occurs.
- Subsequent infractions: Display signal #15, immediately sound whistle, count the goal counts if the try is successful. Charge a team technical foul to the offending team. The opponents are awarded two free throws and the ball at the division line opposite the table.
- **While on Defense**
 - Defensive player simulates being fouled by falling to the floor without illegal contact.
 - First Infraction/subsequent Infractions: Display signal #15, the whistle is withheld, and play is allowed to continue.
 - Play should then be stopped when:
 - The offensive team scores (which may include multiple attempts at the basket),
 - The defensive team gains control of the ball,
 - The offensive team stops attacking the basket, or
 - Any other action creates a dead-ball situation.
 - First Infraction: A team warning is charged to the offending team. Play is resumed at the Point of interruption.
 - Subsequent Infraction: A team technical foul is charged to the offending team. The opponents are awarded two free throws and the ball for a division line throw-in.

Scenario

In the second quarter, A1 dribbles into the lane and snaps their head backward to simulate contact from B1, though no contact occurs. The lead official immediately recognizes the “head bob”, sounds the whistle, displays signal #15, and reports a team warning for faking being fouled. Team A retains possession of the ball at the designated throw-in spot nearest the infraction, determined by its location relative to the three-point line.

Ruling: Correct procedure.

Contrast: Later in the game, A2 attempts a jump shot and, after releasing the ball, falls backward to simulate contact though no contact occurs. The official immediately displays signal #15 and sounds the whistle to stop play. If A2’s try is successful, the goal will count. Because Team A has already received a prior warning, a team technical foul is assessed to Team A. Team B is awarded two free throws and possession of the ball at the division line opposite the table.

Interpretation & Enforcement

- The first offense by a team = *team warning*.
- Immediate whistle on “head bob” (all infractions) and jump shooter faking (second or subsequent infraction)
- Delayed the whistle on jump shooter faking (for the first infraction) or defensive flop (all infractions)
- After a team warning for faking, any subsequent infraction = *team technical foul*.
- Proper use of signal #15 communicates the infraction to players, coaches, and spectators.
- Consistency in enforcement deters faking and supports fair competition.

Conclusion: Rule 4-49, when correctly applied, strengthens game integrity and ensures that officiating decisions are based on actual play rather than deception.