

Seek and ye shall find!

34blue receives out of the arc, 21white is trailing but clearly in late. While 34blue shoots, the defensive player jumps uncoordinated in an attempt to prevent the shot. 21white crosses, airborne, a space absolutely free from opponents, but before landing he impacts 34blue right leg definitely out of the shooter's cylinder. Both players fallen on the floor. The centre and trail refs call a foul indicated as an offensive foul, the ball doesn't enter the basket.

At the end of the last century some players had developed a particular ability to hook, with one arm, an opponent and after pulling it towards them they dropped themselves to "steal" a foul from the referee distracted! We found ourselves, without realizing it, in front of the precursors of the fake. In the first decade of the third millennium, the evolution of the game led defenders to look for new ways to gain an advantage in a situation that often saw them at a disadvantage: frequently in situations of contact on the move between attack and defense, the last were often penalized by a call for a foul. Once they realized that taking a contact, even a light one, on the chest the call could be reversed, the defenders started to let themselves fall, refining more and more the "dive" backwards and managing to collect fouls in favor and stealing balls! Even if, not very quickly, the referee adapted to what was proposed and constantly filled the gap between wrong and correct readings, managing to propose a continuous growth in the quality of the readings over time. With the movement of the game from inside: in the three-second area; to perimeter: outside the two-point arc; the defender's flopping has decreased substantially. The proliferation of the three-point shot has created new situations of contact between shooter and defender, complicated to read and referee, especially when both players are airborne and their legs touch

each other. Many offensive have realized that extending or spreading a leg, can fool even the most experienced referee if he is not careful and focused on the whole play.

There are substantial differences in the evaluation of the contacts between players in progressing or airborne, although before hovering in the air the players definitely have a position on the ground and a direction of movement that after the jump from the ground can be developed in the air to another spot on the court. The principles of legal guard position, cylinder and verticality remain valid, but also must be added that once the jump has been made each player has the right to land in a spot that at the time of the jump was not occupied by other players. Of course, when the trajectories meet (or collide) the referees must determine who moved first in one direction and who is responsible for the contact.

In the clip it is evident that the 21white, even if lately, occupies a free space, also in its flight path. While the 34blue goes out of balance in an uncoordinated shot and spreading the right leg he creates a contact with the legs of the 21white, causing him to fall on the floor. 34blue is responsible for the contact and the damage caused to the opponent absolutely requires a call from the referees. At the moment of contact 34blue has already released the shot and although he is still a shooting player, his team is no longer in control ball: therefore his foul cannot be an offensive foul. If the shot enters the basket this would have to be awarded!

If sanctioned erroneously, as offensive, the 34blue foul would have as penalty a throw-in for the white team and if scored the consequent basket would have to be cancelled. However as often and willingly happens, if the foul, initially sanctioned as an offensive, is reclassified as a foul by a player of the team not in control ball and then sanctioned with a throw-in or with two free throws if the team has exhausted the penalties for fouls in the quarter. In our opinion these

contacts deserve a more in-depth reading, both the dynamics of the contact and the way in which they occur. If extending the leg can be part of the player's shooting balance or player's individual show, knowing that an impact can create damage and possibly injury to an opponent must be part of each player's knowledge. If then the movement is also made to get a foul call to your advantage, this action can be easily configured in unsportsmanlike foul situations: obviously if and only if there is contact between the players.

We are sure that a more consistent reading of these contacts and a more restrictive classification of the contact in the criteria of unsportsmanlike fouls, it would radically reduce their use and sometimes abuse by the shooters. We remind you that an attempt to search for a foul without contact should be sanctioned with a warning or in extremely blatant cases directly with a technical foul.