Starting good…

The jump ball is the essence of basketball! Individual: fighting to win the ball; team: ‘just tapping it’ to a teammate. The Euroleague has decided to ennoble this moment of the game by putting it back into its rules, not only for the start of the game, but perhaps it is the first one that hides the biggest pitfalls.
Do not be fooled by the television bar information, we are at the beginning of the match, the Crew chief toss the jump ball: 43red jumps and with his arm hits the elbow of the 22white, he’s able to tap the ball but it ends ou of bounds. The call by Umpire 2 awords the possession to the red team. The disappointment of the poor 22white is visible. The match doesn’t start well!
Let’s enter the regulation perimeter and then make some considerations. The arm of 22white is high but legal (in his cylinder) and is lifted vertically. When the ball comes out of the referee’s hands the ball becomes live and the match has started. The contact caused by 43red causes damage to 22white and an advantage for the red team: a foul must be called (by one or both umpires).
From some time many players have been positioning themselves at the jump ball as 22white, the high arm certainly makes more difficult to toss the ball. It’s normal that the arms of the players may touch, generally without making foul contact, but it is also true that in some circumstances the contact may create damage or bring an advantage. The referee’s skill lies in reading the contact, assessing its nature and deciding on the correct penalty. I would like to remind you that even though it is a jump ball the foul does not have to be necessarily an UF.
The contact by 43red is evident and deserves a referee’s call. At this point the question you may have asked yourself is: is

the foul PF or UF? Is the contact made by 43red a normal attempt to play the ball? Or is the player not interested in playing the ball and just plays the opponent’s arm? In normal view (real speed) how it happens, at least a PF call would have allowed for a possible IRS review for the upgrade to UF. Certainly a trained and above all concentrated eye, should have detected the infraction committed by 43red. The foul is clearly UF and falls under the first criterion of Article 37.1.1. Once UF has been called, the game would have resumed with 2 free throws for 22white (APA exposed when the ball became live on the first free throw, in the direction of the red team attack direction), white ball possession at the throw-in line in frontcourt with 10:00 on the clock.
The jump ball, especially in EL, often finds referees unprepared, as they are not used to handling it in their national championships, and only once per game. The posture of jumpers like 22white needs a different throwing technique: from higher up and with only one hand, a sort of shot with an imperceptible parabola; small or older referees will certainly have more difficulties. Another aspect to be taken care of, but this is before entering the circle, is that of the position of the players, who, in order to “steal” a millimetre and create an advantage for themselves, arrange themselves in the most disparate way, often intertwining feet, legs and arms! Last but not least, allow us a consideration: the game begins before the start of the clock, so the brain must be on and working, missing a call at this moment denotes lack of attention and concentration.

Palming and interference?

Palming?

Few seconds from the start of the game, the pass to 2red is intercepted by 6white who starts transition, near the centre line he finds 23red but he easily overtakes him palming the ball. 23red recovered and hit the ball with a “paw” that bounced on 6white leg and goes out of bounds: ball to White team!
On the restart the referees would be in a good position to call the palming by 6white, while at the moment of the touch by 23red they are in a bad position to read both a possible contact caused by 23red and the bounce of the ball that touches the leg of 6white. Score: one missed call and one wrong call.

We are witnessing a return to the abuse by some players, especially “small” ones, of palming! This is obviously because there is a lack of calls. Palming is a small movement that creates a huge advantage: by putting his hand under the ball, in a moment the player can change direction and often change speed, forcing the defender to let him pass or commit a foul.

Probably in this specific case, the lack of a call is due to the fact that the referees have not yet entered the game, but this cannot be a justification: the brain must be switched on even before the jumpball!

Interference?

5white lay-up rests on the backboard and the ball rolls into the ring but for the unpredictable laws of physics. The basket “spits” the ball out. 31red, while the ball is still above the level of the ring, slaps the net, 10white in the background claims interference and a valid basket! No referee makes a call.

Technically 31red intervention is dangerous: touching the net

is not automatically an interference violation unless the ball is in contact with the ring and has a chance to enter the basket. The ball makes two small bounces on the ring and one on the backboard. By decreasing the moment of inertia, which makes the ball “float” above the ring, 31red touch arrives when the ball is starting to fall. The movement of the net has no effect on the possibility of the ball entering/exiting the basket! Correct: not to call an interference violation.

A very difficult situation to read and evaluate, in a topical moment of the game. If the referees had called interference, the action could have been reviewed on instant replay. If the decision had changed, the game would have resumed with the assignment of the ball through the alternating possession arrow. Offensive and defensive players, even in a rebounding situation, must still be careful not to touch the net if the ball is in contact with the ring and, above all, to avoid grabbing it when the ball still has a chance to enter the basket, the gesture can cost points.

2020 Rule changes: first change

Art 5/19/44 Players: Injury/Substitutions/Special Situations (Minor): clarifying when a player who receive an assistance is treated as an injured player. If the game is stopped for:

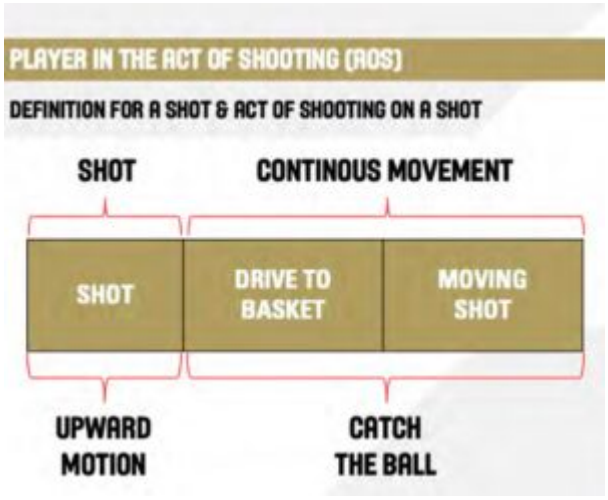
- an injured player cannot resume immediately=doesn’t recover within 15″.
- a player receives assistance from a team member

THE PLAYER MUST BE REPLACED!
This is to eliminate interruptions in the game and manage the

delay in the game resumption more consistently. Assistance can be on a shoe, a contact lens, loss of a taping, a problem with the game uniform, etc…

In the clip1 / just before the ball is at disposal to 3red a red team personnel assists the player by applying a black patch over the not allowed mark of the compression sleeve. The lead referee, correctly, requires the substitution of 3red who leaves the playng court.
In the event of a correctable error involving the player replaced for having been assisted, who has committed his fifth foul or has been disqualified, his substitute must participate in the correction of an error (Art 44.2.5).

Art 15 /Player in the act of shooting (AOS) (Major): there is a new definition for shooting and for continuous movement – note that we are talking about movement – not motion



The rule change intended to improve for players, coaches and referees to understand of whether the foul was committed in AOS or not. It Introduces consistent concepts with how the game is played, there being two types of AOS: the shot and the continuous movement. The continuous movement is divided into two parts: “drive to the basket” and “moving shot”. In every play referees should be able to identify whether the player in AOS was in “shot”, “drive to the basket” or “moving shot”. This requires more of the basketball knowledge as understanding the player shooting techniques, than just knowing the rule.

NEW DEFINITION: **Stationary shot**: a classic example is the classic jump-shot. The player is not moving and is not progressing either without the ball or in dribbling.

- **AOS starts** after gathering the ball, with an upward movement of the arms in the shooting position and towards the basket, not necessarily in front of it.
- **AOS ends** when the ball leaves the shooter’s hands, or if the shooter is airborne, when both feet return to the floor. A player who passes the ball after being fouled is no longer in AOS.

NEW DEFINITION: **Continuous movement**. It covers two situations: drive to the basket (catch the ball moving or at completion of the dribble) and moving shot (continue with the shooting movemen without stopping)

- **AOS – starts** – at the end of a dribble, receiving the ball as you walk/run, when the ball stops on the hand(s), This is called picking up!
- **AOS – ends** – when the ball leaves the shooter’s hands, or if the shooter is in the air, when both feet are back on the ground. A player who passes the ball after being fouled is no longer to be considered in AOS.

Clip 1: 55red after gathering, the stop and shooting fake , with both feet on the ground, begin the upward movement of the arms and is foled by 8white. 55red is in AOS, the foul had to be sanctioned with 2 free throws. (Foul contact occurs when there are still 0.2″ on the 24″ display).
Clip 2: 1yellow, is fouled by 10blue before gathering the ball. 1yellow when the contact occurs is not in AOS, he hasn't complete the dribbling. The foul could be sanctioned as an unsportsmanlike foul (UF) but in case of personal foul (PF) the sanction had to be yellow ball possession – blue team not in foul penalty in the period.
For a better reading and consistent application of the criterion, the referees must identify whether at the moment of the foul contact (not at the moment of the call, which always arrives a moment late) the ball was already in the player's hand(s) and that the player has already started the upward movement of the arms with a continuous and uninterrupted movement.

To fill the cup you often have to empty it!

Every change, even tiny, always causes uncertainty, small or big anxieties, fear of making mistakes, but above all fear of not understanding or having understood good/bad? For some people the learning process will be rapid, for others slow in any case this will only be the beginning! There are referees who after a whole year are still struggling to assimilate the new. Especially under pressure, the referee draws on his experience, the sedimentary habits in years of refereeing will

inevitably come out. Everyone will have his own ways and times to “empty the cup” and fill it with new knowledge. At the beginning an additional effort of concentration will be necessary, especially the control of what is being done on the field, the ability to reflect in the downtime if what is done is correct, the ability to help and the humility to be helped!

Clearly language can be an obstacle and that is why FIBA tries to use the same terminology over and over again and has introduced a manual, available on the App iRef Accademy Library, where you can find all the official terms and abbreviations. The referee of the third millennium, at whatever latitude he is at, must start “thinking” in English, the original language of the regulations, more immediate and direct and above all as far as “world” basketball is concerned, we at WeRef will continue to publish in Italian and Spanish even if sometimes the nuances of Neolatine languages require more attention to avoid confusion.

The changes for 2020 have been divided into two types of change:

- 4 Major changes , two of which with language adjustment in line with the philosophy just illustrated.
  - Art 15 /Player in the act of shooting (AOS): different definition for shooting and for continuous movement – note that we are talking about movement – not motion
  - Art 33 / Cylinder: defines the offensive player cylinder with or without the ball. The rule focuses on legal and illegal actions by the offense and defense in respect to their and their opponent’s cylinders. The definition of defensive cylinder has not changed.
  - Art 37 / Unsportsmanlike Foul (UF): the “Open Path” (UF – C4) is clarified, eliminating any reference to defensive and offensive players. Criteria is changed to require a player to be

progressing towards the opponent’s basket.
        - Art 35 / Double Foul (DOF): it simplifies the definition of double foul, to sanction a DF it is required that both fouls are of the same category (PF – UF* – DF *: *in the case of a UF and a DF will still be considered a double foul).
    - 4 Minor changes
        - Art 5/19/44 Players: Injury/Substitutions/Special Situations: clarifying when a player who receive an assistance is treated as an injured player
        - Appx B / The Scoresheet: clarify how in a Fight (Art 39) the measures against the actively participating coach must be registered: after his expulsion, only one D2 must be registered.
        - Art 49 / change of the duties of the scorekeeper and the timekeeper in relation to modern equipment tools (Substitution, individual and team penalty markers, sound signals)
        - Appx F / Instant Replay System (IRS): everything concerning IRS contained in Art 46 has been transferred to the new Appendix F – only for championships where the IRS protocol is to be applied (some Federations and/or alloys have an integrated or different IRS protocol).

If you will be patient enough to follow us, we will try to propose, on the basis of what FIBA has said, two topics (1 Major & 1 Minor) for each post, hoping that the posts are not too long and heavy. At the beginning of the posts we will use the complete terminology with the addition of the abbreviations, in the following we will use only the abbreviations, we all try together to add new contents to the cup without overflowing the knowledge. Work in progress!

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. 34blu is responsible for the contact and the damage caused to the opponent absolutely requires a call from the referees. At the moment of contact 34blu 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.

The downside

If every now and then the shooters try to steal a foul by spreading a leg and looking for an improbable failed contact, much more problematic to handle is the situation where the defender goes to occupy the shooter’s landing spot, recently renamed as “landing foul”. We have dealt in the last post rights and duties of players who take their feet off the ground and fly back to where they jumped or are entitled to land on a spot that was free at the time of the jump. If in the “spread off leg” situations players can fall after touching each other in the air, the “landing foul” situation presents much more risks and injury possibilities for the

players: than finding or landing, on a regular and flat surface such as parquet, they ends up “tripping” on one or both feet of the defender. Anyone who has played basketball will have experienced how painful it is to twist an ankle, even if only on the playing court, but landing on an opponent’s foot can be much more dangerous and injuries as well as ankle or can affect all joints and even the back.

Clip 1 – 15red dribbles near the two points line, he stops and shoots, 22 yellow jumps to counter the shot but ends up under the feet of the opponent. The referee sanctions a foul on the shooter: 3 free throws.
Clip 2 – 14 white dribbles and stops for a 3pt shot, 10 black jumps to counter the shot and falling back goes to hit the opponent. The referee sanctions a foul on the shooter: a valid 3pt basket and 1 additional free throw.

In the first clip the defender, clearly late, arrives with one foot under the right foot of the shooter who has not yet returned with both feet on the ground, the basket is not made. The defensive movement could become dangerous for the shooter also in relation to the fact that the defender rotates on himself going to invade the opponent’s cylinder.

In the second one the defender, besides being late, is also out of balance, the failed contact occurs when the shooter has put both feet on the ground, the basket will still have to be awarded, but the sanctioned foul will result in a white throw-in because the AOS has now ended. If the black team had been reached foul penalties in the fourth quarter then the foul would have penalized with two free throws.

In both situations, the contacts are part of the game and the delay of the defenders; unfortunately there are some plays in which the defender “walking” gets right under the point of relapse and the consequences of the foul are dangerous. This type of action is configured in the criteria of the unsportsmanlike conduct or expulsion foul, depending on the

manner in which it takes place. Curiously, the FIBA has included this criterion not in article 37 or 38, but in article “33.6 Player in the air”: creating in fact the sixth criterion for the assessment of an unsportsmanlike foul.

This type of contact must be sanctioned consistently, and its abuse by defenders must be limited, especially in conditions where the contact could cause a serious injury to the opponent. Players are the primary asset of basketball and must be adequately protected (by referees), but respect for opponents must be a dogma for any player!

Jump & Land!

The players jump! The four clips below are very interesting, in more of them the referee miss the call, probably surprised by the player’s play! We want to deepen our previous topic (*):

11blue receive the ball and is ready to shoot from the 3pts area. After 11blue has lifted both feet an opponent try to block the shoot, without touching nor the ball or the body of the shooter. To avoid the block 11blue throw the ball to the floor. Once landed the 11blue picks the ball and shoot again.
– Violation / nobody calls –

25white receive the ball and want to shoot immediately. After he has lifted both feet from the floor, 25 White realize that the difensive player is coming, 25white interrupt the shooting movement to avoid the block, then before Landing he throws the

ball, with a crooked pass, towards his mate on his left side. **– Legal –**

25white gains the rebound after the 3pts shoot by 0white. Probably he thinks to shoot immediately, but the continuos movement has been interrupted. 25white jumps & lands with the ball in his hands. After landing 25white starts a dribble and try a shoot. **– Violation / nobody calls –**

16red receive a pass and try immediately to shoot while 0white defend on him. After he has lifted both feet from the floor and the way to basket is closed by the opponent, 16red throws the ball on the floor and after landing he picks the ball to shoot again. 0white didn't touch the ball and the ball didn't touch him.**– Violation / nobody calls –**

A player who holds the ball may jump; when he is airborne and before landing on the floor with one foot or both feet he:

- can only Shoot and Pass
- cannot dribble: if the ball exits from the hand(s) after lifting the pivot foot he commits a violation.

If the players loses the control of the ball which escapes from the hand/s, he doesn't commit any violation (fumble).

Some people say: the player let the ball falling down. What does it means? Did he release a shoot? Did he release a pass? Is it a fumble? Is it a dribble? We have other options: if any other player touches or is touched by the ball? We think that if a player let the ball falling on the floor, he is dribbling. A dribble is "a movement of a live ball caused by a player in control of ball who throws, taps, rolls or bounce the ball on the floor". (RB24.1.1)

The referee must be able to read the play and recognize the movement of the players, as they do when they evaluate an act

of shooting. For a referee is useless to say to everybody body “I have seen” waving his arms; especially when the player commits a violation! A call/no call can be wrong although the explanation is accepted.

Thanks Eurosport

I’d like to publicly express my thanks to Eurosport for authorising weref.it to use the clips of the games broadcast on the player.

Foul Canceled

13white in the act of shooting is fouled by 50red, while 22white pushes the 10red in rebound situation. The lead ref calls two times: one personal foul (P) on 50red and one unsportmanlike foul (U) to 22white. The ref signals the two fouls: P and U and the intention to review the U foul on the IRS. After the reviewing of the play referee informs coach red of his decision and then signals again to the officials table the foul by 50red, correcting the first wrongly signal for a foul by 10red (2 free throws), after he have canceled the U foul by 22white; the game resumes with two free throws by 13white with players line up.

- When the foul to 22white is called the ball is dead

- A personal foul is a player illegal contact with an opponent, whether the ball is live or dead (RB 34.1.1); An unspotmanlike foul is a player contact … ° Excessive, hard contact caused by a player in an effort to play the ball or an opponent (RB 37.1.1 2nd dot – C2)
- The IRS can be used to decide before to sign on the scoresheet: … During any time of the game – wheter a personal, unsportmanlike or disqualifying foul meet the criteria for such a foul shall be upgraded or downgraded or shall be considered a technical foul (RB 46.12 3rd dot 3rd line)
- The foul reviewed even if not occurred cannot be cancelled (FIBA OBRI 46-11) in case the contact not occur the U foul maybe downgraded to a P or T foul in case of fake or swinging elbow without contact (FIBA OBRI 46-10)
- The FIBA OBRI 42-3 mustn't be applied cause the first and the second foul are on two different players and not on the same player in the act of shooting (the ball didn't become dead).

We can not see the IRS images examined on the court, but only the imeages transmitted by Eurosport. The contact caused by 22white seems useless and near the shoulders/neck of the 10red, the ball is dead (or "very close to die" when the contact occurs). The contact called U mustn't be downgraded and the initial decision should be confirmed. The game should resume with 2 free throw by 13white with no players line up, then two free throws for 10red and possession of the ball red at the throw-in line with 14" on the clock shoot.

Many people ask us if the U foul maybe downgraded to P foul; rules book provides that it can be done (RB 46.12 3rd dot 3rd line), but when the foul is downgraded it cannot be cancelled by the scoresheet (FIBA OBRI 46-11). In case of downgrading the U foul to P foul the game resumes as follows:

1. If 22white foul is less or equal than the 4th white team

penalty in the quarter the penalty for the personal foul by 22white will be a throw-in for red team. The game resume with two free throws for 13white no players line up. Even if the last free throw is scored or not the red throw-in from the base line in back court is from the designated throw-in place.

2. If 22white foul is more than the 4th white team penalty in the quarter the penalty for the personal foul by 22white will be 2 free throws for 10red. The penalty is equal to the one for the foul by 50red on 13white. Both penalties are equal and shall be canceled; because at the moment of the first infraction the ball was in white team control, the game resume with a throw-in from the offensive base line in white front court with the seconds showed on shot clock at the moment of the first infraction called.

Rules ranks fouls: personal, unsportmanlike, disqualifying in a graveness stair (by damage and by sanction) IRS protocol allows to reclassify the foul up or doun this stair, without necessarily doing step by step. As you read we may jump from P to D and the other way around without going through U, in some cases P/U/D may be turned in T but a foul reviewed on the IRS cannot be canceled!

Copyright of the clip: Eurosport

Within the basket!

00:12.2 in the 4th quarter Red 87-85 White. The second free throw by 22white bounce on the ring when 8white taps the ball

in the basket. Trail and centre refs grant 2pts for tie the game. The game clock starts late and stops after 2.9”. The referees stop the game and they go to the official’s table to review the play at IRS monitor. After some reviews and one minute they correct the value of the basket in 1pt. Red Coach requests a time-out and after it the game resumes with a throw-in red in frontcourt with 00:12.2 on the game clock.

This is a very interesting situation with many articles of the rules involved. The decision of the referees even if should be shared according to common sense is totally in crash with the rules. Let’s proceed with order:

- The offensive player can tap the ball within the basket – isn’t goaltending
- The tap by 8white is legal, the clock must start!
- A part of the ball is inside the Basket when 8white taps!
- The value of the basket is 1pt, because the ball is already within the basket!
- According 2pts instead 1pt is a correctable error!
- The refs can’t review IRS to establish if the basket counts 1 or 2pts!
- The IRS protocol allows the review only for 2 or 3pts basket! (FIBA must think to change it)
- The game clock must be stopped when the ball exit from the net!
- The refs may review IRS to establish the time elapsed from the tap by 8white to when the ball exit from the net!
- The time on the game clock must be correct – not 00:09.3, neither 00.12.2
- The referees must change the value of basket from 2 to 1pt if the error is discover!
- The game resume with red throw-in at the throw-in line in frontcourt and 14” on the shot clock!

So if the result is partly correct, 1pt granted to team white,

we think that the way followed to take the final decision is not correct. Referees must know the rules and they must use them, although sometimes the rules go in an opposite direction from then common sense or sense of justice. Referees may doubt of the value of the basket and they have to match themselves on what’s happened; they also can review IRS to establish the correct time to play, then decide to correct the erroneous awarding of a point and correct with the help of IRS the elapsed time of play. If during the review of the play they add new information (confirm) that the ball was inside the basket or not the decision will be more correct. We think it would be necessary: by FIBA, to correct and explain better the IRS protocol, that now is full of holes and traps; by referees, to know better rules and protocols, and to use one or both when it’s allowed!

Last but not least: the TV commentator told their (wrong) opinion, then they change opinion, but they explain the rule wrongly; is not allowed to any person, like the man behind the table looking the IRS monitor, to suggest the value (1pt) of the basket!