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FIBA Basketball Rule Changes 2026

A clear, practical reading guide for players, coaches, referees, table officials and event organisers. Effective from 1 October 2026.

About this guide. This is an independently prepared, plain-language summary for the Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) website, based on FIBA's The FIBA Official Basketball Rules Changes, July 2026, version 1.1. It is not an official FIBA rulebook and does not reproduce the full set of rules or interpretations. If any wording differs, the final FIBA Official Basketball Rules 2026 prevail.

At a glance: what has changed?

Area	Main update
Technical fouls	Player technical fouls are split into Category 1 and Category 2; only Category 1 counts towards game disqualification.
Unsportsmanlike fouls	Former unsportsmanlike-foul situations are reorganised into disruptive and flagrant fouls.
Shooting action	More precise rules define when the act of shooting begins and ends.
Scoresheet and signals	New signals and foul abbreviations, including DI, FL and BD.
Other updates	Court-line colours, uniforms, double dribbling, team classification and instant replay.

Source reference: FIBA 2026 Rules Changes v1.1, pages 5–24. This guide groups related changes for convenient reading.

1. Game administration: Article 1

Whenever the Official Basketball Rules refer to the commissioner, the same reference also applies to the technical delegate. This aligns terminology across competitions using different officiating structures.

2. Court markings: Article 2.5

Court markings can use different colours, provided visibility and consistency are maintained.

- All lines must be solid, 5 cm wide, clearly visible and strongly contrasting with the court and adjacent boundary lane.
- All boundary lines - including sidelines, endlines, throw-in lines and team-bench-area lines - must share one colour.

- Matching markings on opposite half-courts must have matching colours: restricted areas and rebound places, free-throw semicircles, free-throw lines, three-point lines and no-charge semicircles.
- The centre line and centre circle may differ in colour from other markings and may also differ from each other.

3. Team uniforms: Article 4.3

Team members must wear socks of the same dominant colour, but the former requirement that socks be visible has been removed. Other uniform requirements remain relevant, including matching dominant colours for shirts and shorts, shirt sleeves ending above the elbow, shorts ending above the knee, and shirts tucked into shorts (or permitted all-in-ones).

4. Act of shooting: Article 15

The updated text distinguishes jump shots and other moving shots from continuous-motion drives to the basket. This is particularly relevant when determining shooting-foul penalties.

Jump shots and other moving shots

- The act of shooting begins when the player starts moving both the shoulders and the ball upwards towards the opponents' basket.
- It ends when the ball leaves the player's hand(s), or a completely new shooting action begins; for an airborne shooter, the relevant action concludes when both feet return to the floor.

Continuous-motion drives to the basket

- The shooting action starts once the player has gathered the ball, which comes to rest in the hand(s), following a dribble or airborne catch, and continues the shooting motion toward the basket.
- This action is in the frontcourt, typically between the offensive three-point line and basket.
- The action ends when the ball is released, or a new shooting action occurs; for an airborne shooter, both feet must have returned to the floor.

Additional clarifications

- The player normally must be in the frontcourt to be in the act of shooting. An exception applies to the final action before a period/overtime or shot clock expires; the player may then be anywhere on the court.
- The number of legal steps taken does not determine whether a player is in the act of shooting.
- The ball does not necessarily need to be released where an opponent holds the shooting player's arm(s) and prevents the attempt.
- After being fouled, a player who passes the ball is no longer considered to have been in the act of shooting. For jump/moving shots, an upward movement away from the basket or not facing the basket also removes that status.

5. Double dribble: Article 24.2

Once a player's first dribble has ended, a second dribble is prohibited unless control of a live ball was lost due to one of these conditions:

- The player took a shot for a goal.
- The ball was touched by an opponent.
- On a pass or fumble, the ball touched or was touched by another player.

The rule now makes clear that any one of the listed situations is sufficient, rather than all of them being required.

6. Technical fouls: Article 36

Technical fouls committed by players now have two categories based on severity. The distinction affects game disqualification, not whether a player technical counts toward the player's and team's foul totals.

Category	Examples	Counts towards game disqualification?
Category 1	Disrespect or offensive gestures; taunting/provocation; interfering with an opponent's vision; excessive elbow swinging without contact; faking being fouled.	Yes
Category 2	Game delay, including preventing prompt throw-ins/free throws; late arrival to start play; improper hanging on the ring; defensive goaltending on the last free throw.	No

Important: A technical foul against a player, regardless of category, is charged as a player foul and counts as a team foul. A Category 1 bench technical is charged to the head coach and does not count as a team foul.

When a player is disqualified

- Two Category 1 technical fouls; or
- Two flagrant fouls; or
- One Category 1 technical foul plus one flagrant foul.

Category 2 technical fouls and disruptive fouls do not contribute to these game-disqualification combinations.

Head coach disqualification

- Two Category 1 technical fouls recorded as C for personal unsportsmanlike conduct; or
- Three Category 1 technical fouls attributable to bench conduct (B or BD), including a combination with one C as specified by the rules.

A foul triggering disqualification under these combinations is penalised as the foul itself; there is no extra penalty merely for that game disqualification.

7. Disruptive fouls: Article 37

The disruptive foul (DI) is a new foul type for illegal contact that unfairly interrupts play but does not reach the seriousness of a flagrant foul.

Common situations

- Unnecessary defensive contact, without a legitimate attempt to play the ball, to stop an offensive transition before the offensive player begins shooting.
- Unnecessary contact anywhere on the court to stop the game or shot clock near the end of a quarter or overtime, without a legitimate attempt to play the ball.
- Contact from behind or the side against a player progressing toward the basket with no opponent between that player and the basket, where the player controls, is trying to control, or is receiving a pass for the ball. Applies until the act of shooting starts.

Penalty

- The foul counts as a player and team foul; it does not count toward game disqualification.
- If the player was not shooting: two free throws.
- If a basket was scored while shooting: the goal counts, plus one free throw.
- If a shooting attempt missed: two or three free throws, as appropriate.
- After the free throw(s), the team retains possession with a frontcourt throw-in from the throw-in line opposite the scorer’s table.

8. Flagrant fouls: Article 38

A flagrant foul (FL) is a serious illegal contact that violates sportsmanship or fair play, going beyond an ordinary personal or disruptive foul.

- Contact not constituting a legitimate basketball play, against an opponent with or without the ball.
- A reckless, violent or dangerous act that causes, or may cause, injury.
- Excessive hard contact, even in an effort to play the ball or the opponent.

A flagrant foul counts as a player/team foul and does count toward game disqualification. The free throw allocation is the same as for a disruptive foul (two for a non-shooter, one additional if a shot is made, or two/three if missed), followed by the frontcourt throw-in specified in the rule. A centre-circle jump ball applies in the special first-quarter-start case specified in Article 38.

The officiating decision must be based on the action and applied consistently throughout the game.

9. Quick comparison: foul categories

Foul	Counts as team foul?	Game disqualification tally?
Player technical - Category 1	Yes	Yes
Player technical - Category 2	Yes	No
Disruptive (DI)	Yes	No
Flagrant (FL)	Yes	Yes
Bench technical - Category 1	No (charged to coach)	Coach disqualification rules apply

This table is a short comparison only. Penalties and applicable criteria remain subject to the complete FIBA Official Basketball Rules.

10. Referee signals and scoresheet: Appendices A and B

Updated referee signals have been introduced for delay of game, disruptive foul and flagrant foul. Officials should consult the original FIBA document (pages 17–18) for the signal illustrations.

Foul type / person	Scoresheet code	How it is recorded
Disruptive foul / player	DI	Not circled
Flagrant foul / player	FL	Circle FL
Category 1 technical / player	T	Circle T
Category 2 technical / player	T	Do not circle T
Category 1 technical / head coach	C	Circle C
Category 1 technical / team bench	B	Circle B
Category 1 technical / accompanying delegation member	BD	Circle BD

A circle identifies scoresheet fouls that count towards game disqualification. For fouls involving free throws, record the applicable number (1, 2 or 3) beside the foul marking. Consult Appendix B in the full 2026 rulebook for complete examples.

11. Ranking eliminated teams: Appendix D.5.2

For certain multi-phase tournaments, teams eliminated at the same stage are ranked together. The relevant group (for example, four teams eliminated in a quarter-final qualification round) is ordered using these criteria in sequence:

- Higher placing in the group phase.
- Better win-loss record from all group-phase games.
- Higher group-phase game-points difference.
- More points scored in all group-phase games.
- If still unresolved, the applicable FIBA ranking decides the order.

FIBA's source publication provides worked examples for positions 5–8, 9–12 and 13–16 (pages 20–22). Rankings should not be based solely on the knockout match in which the team was eliminated.

12. Instant replay and coach challenges: Appendix F

Final 2:00 of fourth quarter and each overtime

Instant replay now expressly covers whether a thrower-in still held the ball or had it at their disposal when the defending team committed a foul during a throw-in. Existing reviewable situations include the timing of certain shots/fouls and goaltending/basket interference decisions.

Reviewable at any point in a game

Following a foul, a goaltending or basket-interference decision may be reviewed, including whether a violation occurred and whether it was called correctly. The rules also expressly permit reviewing whether a foul meets the criteria for a personal, disruptive, flagrant or disqualifying foul, or whether it should be upgraded, downgraded or treated as a technical foul (and vice versa, as applicable).

Depending on the result of a corrected goaltending/basket-interference decision, the restart can be an endline throw-in after a legal basket, a throw-in for the team clearly controlling the ball, or a jump-ball situation where neither team had clear control.

Head coach's challenge

The two new review categories are also available through the head coach's challenge. The time restrictions applied to some referee-initiated reviews do not restrict a valid head coach's challenge, which may be requested at any time in the game, subject to the complete rules.

Implementation checklist for teams and organisers

- Brief referees and table officials on Category 1/2 technicals and the disruptive/flagrant foul distinction.
- Update paper or digital scoresheets to include DI, FL and BD and circle relevant disqualification-counting fouls.
- Teach the revised shooting-action definitions, especially frontcourt drives and passes after contact.

- Check competition materials for new uniform and court-colour provisions.
- Verify tournament ranking procedures and instant-replay protocols against the final official text.

Official source: FIBA, The FIBA Official Basketball Rules Changes - Valid as of 1 October 2026, published July 2026, version 1.1. Copyright belongs to FIBA. Please refer to the official FIBA Official Basketball Rules and Interpretations for authoritative wording and decisions.

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