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D-League's New Goaltending Rule, Shorter OT

The NBA D-League incorporates new rules changes for the 2010-11 season.

by [Kyle Stack](#) / [@KyleStack](#)

Some of the largest companies in the world have research and development departments. Think Google, Microsoft or Johnson & Johnson. The goal for those companies, usually found in the tech or pharmaceutical fields, is to create and enhance products that best satisfy their consumers' needs. It makes sense for professional sports leagues to do the same. That's what the NBA has in mind with new rules changes for its minor league, the NBA Development League (NBA D-League).

The D-League will incorporate a goaltending rule used in international competition and will shorten its overtime periods for the upcoming 2010-11 season. The overtime rule is simple: each overtime period will be shortened from five to three minutes.

The goaltending rule will make the ball live as soon as it hits the rim. Whereas players had to previously observe an invisible cylinder hanging over the rim whenever the ball was directly over the basket, players can now touch the ball as soon as it draws iron. To call it a goaltending rule might not be accurate; it encourages defensive players to swat the ball away once it hits the rim. Offensive players can tip in or dunk the ball home rather than wait to ensure it isn't above the rim.

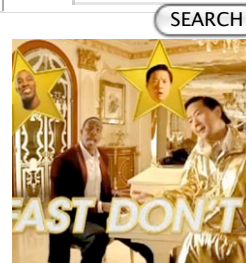
Each rule is a proactive measure taken to streamline the game's flow. "We're going to see how it impacts the game," said Chris Alpert, Director of Basketball Operations and Player Personnel for the D-League. "We had the international goaltending rule five years ago. We tried it for a year. We want to revisit it."

The goaltending rule is currently used in all FIBA competition, including the recent World Championships which Team USA won. Alpert said the rule change will let players showcase their athleticism more often. Most fans like dunks, blocks and any kind of mid-air play. They should get more of that with this rule. Alpert said loads of data will be recorded on the new rule.

"We're going to look at plays around the rim, examples of plays where guys touch the rim," Alpert said. We're going to look at field goal percentage, how many times a goaltending would've normally been called but wasn't. So, you're looking at stoppage of play. There are a host of data points we're going to look at."

More mid-air contact could result in an increase in fouls, thus thwarting the improved game flow that this rule is supposed to help generate. That won't really be known until the D-League starts its season in mid-November. The league will pay attention to that area, though.

"We're going to look at the number of fouls called per game, the number of free throws shot, the number of stoppages because of that, injuries...we're going to take in as much information as we can," Alpert said.



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The shortened overtime period is meant to keep excitement in any game that extends beyond regulation. Alpert noted there were times when the air was let out of the arena once the game flipped over to an extra period. The five minutes previously allotted for overtime made the game drag on, at least in perception. The D-League wants to study whether a shorter amount of time in the extra period can maintain the crowd intensity that builds to a crescendo late in close contests.

"The biggest thing is looking at the effect it has on fan viewership at the arena," Alpert said. The same goes for viewership on TV. An overtime period that's two minutes shorter might encourage more fans to continue watching the game rather than turning the channel.

The D-League will work with the NBA to review how these rules affect player, coach and referee performance. All will be affected. Some NBA players assigned to a D-League squad will have to adjust to the goaltending rule. Referees will have their reaction time tested to the max by determining which mid-air collisions constitute fouls and which ones don't. Coaches will also have to adjust.

"It's going to affect timeouts, particularly with the overtime rule," Alpert said of how coaches might deal with the new rules changes. "Who knows? It could affect substitution patterns."

Adjusting to a rule change is nothing new for the D-League. This is where the brand-new [adidas Revolution 30 jerseys](#) were tested. The composite ball that was used briefly in the NBA in 2006 was first subjected to tests in the D-League. Other rule changes and equipment changes were first sent to the league, which more or less acts as the NBA's research and development department.

The D-League's role isn't just to develop more players and coaches and referees for the NBA. It serves as a way to try out new rules and equipment that can eventually enhance the experience of NBA ballgames. That's what the NBA has in mind with these new rules changes.

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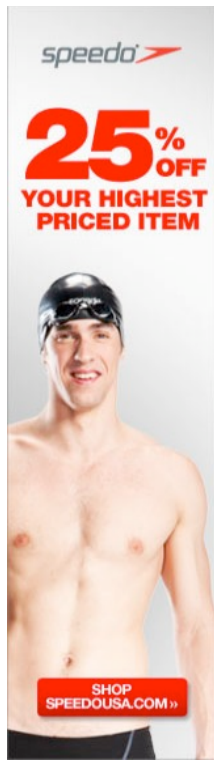
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5 Responses to "D-League's New Goaltending Rule, Shorter OT"

c_cantrell Posted: Oct.6 at 6:22 pm

should see alot more put backs and sweet rejections with this new rule

Evin Demirel Posted: Oct.6 at 6:45 pm

Interesting article, Kyle.

Do you know why the NBDL iced the goaltending rule change five years ago? I think there are possible ramifications from this rule for future U.S. contingency teams in international play, which I wrote about here: <http://theglobalhook.blogspot.com/2010/10/new-world-basketball-order-draws-nearer.html>

Groves@UWA Posted: Oct.6 at 8:10 pm

i like the D-League... and the rule

M Cho Posted: Oct.7 at 12:32 am

I like the shorter OT — keeps the intensity high. Plus, it changes how players worry about fouling out. Good idea.

what Posted: Oct.7 at 2:31 am

It seems to me that most of the goaltending calls that fans would like to see be counted are the flyswat rejections that are overruled because the ball is already on its way down, which would not be affected by this rule change. Aside from the occasional putback dunk, I don't see how this is going to make a major difference.

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