Comments and Interpretations
By Art Hyland, Secretary-Rules Editor, NCAA Men’s Basketball Rules Committee
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Play Situation- Prior to a game, the Referee sees that A1 has a padded forearm/elbow and inspects the padding per Rule 2-5.1. The Referee also notices the padding is made of a slow-rebounding foam at least ½-inch thick which covers a guard, brace or cast made all or partially of a non-pliable substance such as fiberglass, plaster or metal. After inspection, the Referee approves the equipment for play. Is the Referee correct?

RULING: Yes. Rule 1-26.2 states that, “Elbow, hand, finger, wrist or forearm guards, casts or braces made of fiberglass, plaster, metal or any other non-pliable substance shall be prohibited.” Furthermore, Rule 1-26.4 states that, “Pliable (flexible or easily bent) material covered on all exterior sides and edges with not less than ½-inch thickness of slow-rebounding foam, may be used to immobilize and protect an injury.” Based on the opinion of the NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports (CSMAS), the padding requirements of Rule 1-26.4 are sufficient to protect other players who may contact or be contacted by the injured player’s protective equipment. CSMAS indicated that the institution’s medical staff must first determine if the injured player is medically cleared to participate with the protective equipment.

In addition, the CSMAS emphasized that the officials should continue to inspect the equipment throughout the game to ensure that no hard or sharp edges are exposed per Rule 1-26.5 that could injure another player.

Accordingly, the provisions of Rule 1-26.4 also apply to the protective devices described in 1-26.2 and permit the slow-rebounding foam covering to be used to cover the guards, casts, braces or other non-pliable substances. Finally, per Rule 2-5.1, the Referee maintains final authority to inspect and approve all equipment both before the game and during the course of the game and to apply the NCAA men’s basketball rules and interpretations.

If you have any questions, please contact me at art.hyland@comcast.net.