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[Prep Boys Basketball](#)

# Shot clock in high school basketball: 'It's a matter of when, not if'





FILE - In this March 19, 2010, file photo, a technician adjusts a shot clock after it malfunctioned and delayed the start of the California against Louisville NCAA first-round college basketball game in Jacksonville, Fla. The NCAA has shaved 5 seconds off the shot clock, leaving teams 30 seconds to run their offense. Coaches don't expect dramatic changes, but practices have changed, communication and court awareness are more important than ever, and full-court pressure is getting a new look as a way to take advantage of the shorter time. (AP Photo/Steve Helber, File)

Steve Helber STF

**By David Adam** Herald-Whig

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QUINCY -- Kurt Gibson was positive that the 30-second shot clock was coming to basketball in Illinois, if not this year then certainly next year.

Gibson, associate executive director of the Illinois High School Association, said the shot clock narrowly missed being approved by the National Federation of High Schools last year.

So when he was interviewed in late March by David Wilhelm of the Belleville News-Democrat at the Class 3A and 4A state tournaments in Peoria about upcoming rules changes for next year, Gibson said, "If I was a betting guy, I would expect the shot clock to come out of that (rules) committee, to be approved for 2018-19."

However, when Gibson returned to his Bloomington office and took his first look at the list of 18 proposed rules changes that the NFHS basketball rules committee would be considering for next season, he was shocked.

None involved adding the shot clock on a national basis.

"I was like, 'What? There's nothing here on the shot clock?'" Gibson said. "I just assumed there would be a proposal for this year."

Gibson still believes the shot clock is coming to Illinois. It just isn't happening in time for next season.

"My answer has changed. There was a time I thought it would not happen," he said. "Now, I believe it's a matter of when, not if."

The NBA was the first to introduce a 24-second one in 1954. Women's college basketball adopted a 30-second shot clock for the 1970-71 season. The NCAA implemented a 45-second shot clock for men for the 1985-86 season, then reduced it to 35 seconds for the 1993-94 season.

The NFHS hasn't wavered in its belief that a shot clock is unnecessary at the high school level. If the NFHS decides to make a change in the near future, one of the people who will be involved is Kevin Garner, an Edina, Mo., native and former Clark County (Mo.) boys basketball coach.

Garner now is an assistant executive director with the Missouri State High School Activities Association, and he is in his first year as one of eight regional representatives on the 11-person basketball rules committee that met earlier this month in Indianapolis. He represents Missouri, South Dakota, North Dakota, Kansas and Minnesota in Section 5. Nate Hampton of the Michigan High School Athletic Association represents Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin.



Garner believes a shot clock proposal will be on the rules committee's ballot next year.

"I would be totally shocked if it wasn't," he said.

Eight states -- California, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota and Washington -- use a shot clock at the high school level. However, that also means those states forfeit a seat on the NFHS rules committee.

The Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association voted last June to implement a 35-second shot clock for boys and girls basketball to be implemented for the 2019-20 season. However, it changed course this past December and rescinded that vote.

If the NFHS were to pass a rule for the shot clock, Garner says Missouri's implementation of the rule would depend on how it was passed.

"When the 3-point line was passed (for the 1987-88 season), it was not a (nation-wide) rule. It was done by state adoption," Garner said. "If the NFHS passed a rule for use of a shot clock, Missouri would conform. If it was passed as a state adoption, it would be a vote of our state."

Garner says his research shows that coaches in Missouri are for it, but administrators are not -- and administrators are the ones who will cast votes if rules go up for a state vote.

"The empirical data we have shows that a shot clock increases scoring by four points per game, and it decreases shooting percentages by quite a bit," he said. "If you go to a game, the number of times where a shot clock violation occurs is the exception, not the norm. So does (a shot clock) truly enhance the game of basketball?"

Garner says other concerns raised by administrators are the ongoing cost of paying someone to operate the clock during a game, as well as cost of the clocks.

A local sporting goods provider said mounting clocks on a stand in the corner of the gym would save a few dollars, but mounting a clock above each backboard typically costs about \$2,000. That cost could increase if the clocks are not adaptable to the scoreboards currently in use.

He also noted that NCAA statistics from 2017 show that 546,428 male high school athletes who played basketball, 3.4 percent of them played in the NCAA. For the females, 429,380 played high school basketball and 3.9 percent played in the NCAA.

"Should we make the high school game like the college game to help less than 4 percent of the players?" Garner said.

Gibson believes the shot clock is coming to the high school game, but he has his own reservations.

"There's this rush to make high school sports like college sports," he said. "I'm not sure the collegiate way of playing fits high school players, as it relates to the shot clock. But just from listening to colleagues around the country, I hear more and more that we need to make the high school game as much like the college game as we can.

"I guess my final answer would be, if the Federation says we're going to have it, then we'll go ahead with that."

## BASKETBALL RULES PROPOSALS

Eighteen changes have been proposed for next year by state high school associations to the National Federation of High Schools basketball rules committee. Among the highlights:

° The addition of a restricted area arc. Its purpose is to stop secondary defenders from taking a position under the basket in an attempt to draw an offensive foul when a player is driving to the basket.

- Allowing only players in the game, not coaches, to call a timeout during a live ball.
- Resetting the number of fouls necessary to shoot bonus free throws after each quarter. High school teams now reach a one-and-one bonus on the seventh team foul of each half and reached the double bonus (two shots) on the 10th team foul. NCAA women's basketball teams now reach the bonus and shoot two free throws on the fifth team foul in each quarter.

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**Phil Featheringill** · Works at Retired

Change just for the sake of change is not necessarily change for good. Why do we need a shot clock in high school basketball? Seems to me that some of the changes are changes made by bureaucrats so they can justify their jobs &/or positions. HS doesn't need a shot clock.

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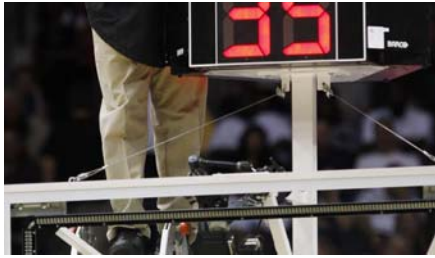


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