

Florida basketball shot clock debate heats up after Boone sneaks by Oak Ridge

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The debate over whether or not Florida high school basketball play should be governed by shot clocks boiled over Thursday after a stall tactic led to an unusually memorable and low-scoring game at Boone.

The Braves (8-6) pulled out a 20-16 upset win over nationally ranked Oak Ridge (11-3) in a game played at a snail's pace. The halftime score was 3-0 in favor of Oak Ridge and the shortage of shots taken caused an uproar on social media. Many hoops fans took exception to teams holding the ball.

The [National Federation of State High School Associations](#) does not mandate shot clocks for boys and girls basketball games. Just eight states throughout the country — California, Maryland, Massachusetts,

New York, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota and Washington — use a shot clock.

The [FHSAA](#) Basketball Advisory Committee last discussed the issue in 2016. The committee of coaches was in favor of adding shot clocks at the time, but the topic was dismissed as being too costly when it comes to equipment installation and the possible need to hire additional officials for games.

Boone drained much of the game clock throughout the first three quarters by holding the ball at a standstill and passing it around the perimeter. The Braves took a 5-4 lead with under seven minutes to play in the fourth. The final period was littered with foul shots.

“Boone was disciplined and executed their game plan, and I can respect that,” Oak Ridge coach Steve Reece said Friday. “We missed some free throws that could’ve won us the game, so I’m not taking anything away from them. Out of all the teams we’ve played in the state the past two years, they’re the only ones to beat us, and they’ve done it twice.”

Oak Ridge is 32-0 against all other Florida schools the past two years. Boone won last year’s meeting 78-76 with a considerably different lineup.

“If you really sit back and look at it from a different perspective, our plan was not to go out there and hold the ball,” Boone coach Dave Martinson said. “Oak Ridge is so long and big and we knew there was no way we’d be able to penetrate that [defensive] zone. The plan was to spread them out some.”

The result was Boone attempting to bait the Pioneers out of their zone before getting into its half-court offense. When that didn't happen, the Braves let the clock tick away without interruption. It's an approach that's impossible to mimic at the professional and collegiate levels.

The NBA implemented a 24-second shot clock for pro basketball in 1954. That's the same time limit used at the international level and by the WNBA.

The men's college game added a 45-second shot clock for the 1985-86 season. It was reduced to 35 seconds in 1993. Another NCAA tweak trimmed the clock to 30 seconds in 2015, which falls in line with women's college basketball.

The shot clock is activated when a player touches the ball on an inbound pass from another player. The clock is turned off when the ball makes contact with the rim and resets after a rebound or change of possession when obtained by the defense.

Shot clocks with a 30-second limit have been used by some state high school teams outside the FHSAA.

"A game with no shot clock is like playing a football game and not being able to rush the quarterback," said coach Kenny Gillion of West Oaks, a member of the Sunshine Independent Athletic Association, which he said has used shot clocks as a league norm since 2014.

The two coaches from Thursday night's game have a similar outlook on the shot clock's place at the prep level.

"I do think a shot clock is needed, but not because of this game,"

Reece said.

"If it does happen, I hope it happens during my career because I think it's a challenge that will be kind of fun," Martinson said. "But logistically, that's the issue. With the way [schools] are strapped financially, there are a lot of other things we need more than a clock in a gym."

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