

For all of you who missed it, which is pretty much everyone, FIBA, the international basketball body modified many of their rules to parallel those of the NBA. Here is an overview:

"BEIJING – International basketball is going to look more like the NBA after two major rule changes take effect.

The three-point line will move back and the three-second area will change shape starting in 2010, the sport's world governing body announced Saturday.

After Oct. 1, 2010, FIBA will begin using the new rules for major events such as the Olympics and world and continental championships.

The three-point line will move from 20 feet, 6.1 inches to 22 feet, 1.7 inches. The NBA line is 23-9.

FIBA general secretary Patrick Baumann said it was likely FIBA would move toward the NBA distance in the next 10 years.

FIBA also will reconfigure the three-second area to match the NBA shape, going from a trapezoid to a rectangle. "

The only major disparity that won't change is that there will be no "cylinder" above the rim as there is in the NBA. The current FIBA rules will stay in place.

This is important news for several reasons:

1. Maybe with American kids growing up playing and practicing by rules that closely mirror NBA and college rules, we can use younger, amateur players rather than having NBA owners pay for the salaries of players so that GE can make millions of dollars and show a couple games on CNBC at midnight. Do I sound bitter here ? I of course am. Nothing dumber. The Olympics is not about national pride, its about billions of dollars. Ok, off that soap box.
2. If the rules are close enough, it creates the remote, but still possible opportunity for international officials to become NBA officials. That would expand the talent pool by thousands , which is a good thing.
3. What I am guessing is the real reason behind the change is that it makes it easier to franchise the NBA brand of basketball internationally and for American basketball fans to get understand it and get behind it. That is a good idea. (I'm all for international use of NBA players when we get paid for our players to participate. It's that old American capitalistic concept of I Pay, You Pay)
4. It creates an additional development league for the NBA. If players who are too young for the NBA want to earn a living playing basketball, they can go to Europe, prove themselves, get paid and learn the game in an environment comparable to the NBA. That again is a good thing.
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