

First, let me go on the record as saying that in the event that a vote comes up to change the rules about suspensions for players leaving the bench, I will vote against changing it.

Why ? Because its incredibly simple to educate players about the rule. Its a rule they fully understand and they understand the consequences of violating the rule. That makes the NBA stronger because it removes uncertainty. Can it result in a game(s) being impacted , yes. However, that impact results from an action a player knew violated the rules and was a mistake. There is no uncertainty about it. All they had to do was not leave the bench.

I actually think that more rules need to be iron clad like the "don't leave the bench rule". Whenever we can remove discretion in enforcement from the NBA the game is better for it.

Fans will hate the Suns not having Amare and Boris, but they all know the rule and recognize that the players knew it and fully understood it. What really gets fans, and me upset is when they can't understand how and why a rule is enforced.

When Jason Terry was suspended for throwing a punch last year, our only argument was whether or not he actually threw a punch. If he did, all involved, including Jason knew and understood what the punishment would be and why.

When Udonis Haslem got suspended a game for throwing a mouthpiece while lying on the ground, I didn't quite get that one. Fined for being mad at an official, that I understand all too well. The suspension I didn't.

When guys throw an elbow to the head or a knee to the groin or have a habit of stepping under a player as he lands, its far too difficult for officials and the league to gauge intent. Its pretty much impossible. I think we need to take a no leeway position and make both a flagrant 2 foul. Make it a no questions asked rule. Watch how quickly teams re educate players on how to close out on shooters and how quickly player behavior changes. Not by all, but those who can't probably are repeat offenders and deserve the penalty. A guy missing the rest of a game is a whole lot better than injuring a player and impacting his career.

It won't completely eliminate the need for the NBA to pass judgment on player intent and dish out punishment, but it will reduce the number of times they have to do it.

To make the job of enforcing all of this a little easier, I would like to propose something publicly that I have proposed privately but was shot down.

Allow officials, at their discretion, to use instant replay to review unsportsmanlike conduct or any action that could lead to a flagrant 2 foul.

This would be an important change not only to help get the play right, but also because it lets the punitive action for a bad act take place in the game it impacts. It would also make fans feel that the officials took the appropriate action based on the best information available. It can be incredibly frustrating to everyone at the game when a replay contradicts the best efforts of an official on a matter as serious as a Flagrant Foul.

Its not a cure, but it increases the chances of penalties being relative to the game in which the problem occurred. Plus, although it wouldn't eliminate the need for the league to take action on players, it would probably reduce the number of times they would be asked to take action over a players on court behavior.