

Taking the Charge

One of the most underrated skills of a defensive player is “taking the charge.” A “charge” is when an offensive player runs into (or runs over) a defensive player that has established position on defense. The term “taking the charge” is meant for the defender – when they get in a position to take the charge. It is a hard skill to master; it takes a lot of mental toughness for youth basketball players to put themselves in a position to get “run over” by an offensive player running full speed at them.

You hear coaches yelling at their players “take the charge” all the time, but I have to wonder if the player actually understands what that means or if they even know how to perform this very important basketball skill? If you want your players to perform this defensive skill (or any basketball skill), and do it well – you need to include it as part of your practice plan.

Taking the Charge – The Steps:

1. Establish position quickly while in a good defensive stance (and anticipate the path of the offensive player).
2. Keep your hands up - don't ever push outward at the offensive player.
3. When you get “hit” you want to “recoil” – and it always helps to make some noise.
4. Keep your weight on your heels (this will help you prepare to go down easier).
5. Your “butt” should hit the floor first.
6. Keep your chin tucked in to your chest.
7. Keep your hands up – do not reach back with your hands behind you (this could cause injury).
8. If the whistle doesn't blow (no call), hop up quickly and continue playing defense.

Taking the Charge – Notes

- a) The defender will rarely get the “charge” call under the basket (but it's possible).
- b) A defender standing away from the basket, out of the lane, will get the charge call a higher
- c) It takes a certain mental toughness, aggressiveness, and attitude to be able to take a charge.
- d) Coaches must ensure that their players understand what taking the charge is, and how to perform the skill correctly.
- e) A player that has been slacking on defense, can make up for this by taking a charge...

There's nothing like seeing a defender get into position and take a charge (especially if your team really needs possession of the ball). So if and when one of your players “takes a charge” in a game – make sure that you give them lots of praise for their effort...