

Clear Path to the Basket

Clear path fouls are typically called when a defender stops an offensive player on a fast-break opportunity.

To be a clear path foul, the illegal contact must occur on the offensive player with the ball while he *and the ball* are in between the tip-of-circle extended in the backcourt and the basket in the frontcourt, and there is no defender between the ball and the basket. There must also be clear possession at the time of the foul, the play must have originated in the backcourt (including throw-ins), and the offensive team must be deprived of an opportunity to score. Provided all of these elements are met, the foul is ruled clear path.

While the illegal contact component of this rule is usually obvious, there are a few aspects concerning player location that can be confusing:

- If any defender (including a defender not involved with the foul) is ahead of the player with the ball being fouled at the time of the foul, there is no clear path foul if it is deemed the defender could have obtained a position between the ball and the basket had the play continued;
- If the defensive player who commits the foul was ahead of the driving player when that player entered the frontcourt (one foot in), but gets beat and then fouls the player from behind or the side, there is no clear path foul even though he wasn't between the offensive player and the basket at the time of the foul;
- If an offensive player is positioned between the tip-of-circle in the backcourt and the basket in the frontcourt, and he passes the ball to a teammate ahead of him and is subsequently fouled with no defender between him and the basket, a clear path foul is called (provided the timing of the call deprives the offensive team from scoring).

The penalty for a clear-path foul is two free throws and possession.