

Glossary of Basketball Terms

The following terms are a glossary of basketball terminology that will improve your understanding of the game.

1-1 - A "one-and-one" is a set of free throws that is awarded to the team who has been fouled 7,8, or 9 times in one half (NCAA rules). The free throw shooter must make the first shot in order to shoot the second shot.

Air-Ball - a shot that does not hit the rim

Alley-oop - a pass from one teammate to another that results in one player catching the ball in mid-air and dunking

Assist - a pass that leads directly to a score

And-1 - whenever a player is fouled in the act of shooting and makes the shot with the chance to make an additional free-throw

Backboard - the solid piece of glass, plastic, or wood that is attached to the back of the rim and anchors it in place

Backcourt Violation - a team is penalized by loss of possession when the ball crosses back over the half-court line after the ball has initially been advanced beyond half-court line

Bank Shot - a shot that ricochets off the backboard through the rim for a score

Block - to swat, tip, or redirect an opponent's shot so they cannot score

Blocking Foul - a foul penalized to a defender that steps in front of an offensive player while the defender is still in motion

Box-Out - a technique used to shield an opponent away from the basketball in order to secure a rebound

Bonus - when a team has committed 7,8, or 9 team fouls in a half, the other team is entitled to shoot a 1- and -1 at the free throw line (NCAA rules)

Brick - a shot that clanks off the rim

Charging Foul - an offensive foul usually committed by the dribbler who runs over a set defensive player

Crossover – when a player quickly changes the ball from one hand to the other across their body

Defense - an attempt to stop the opposing team from scoring baskets

Double-Bonus - when a team has committed 10+ fouls in a half, the other team is entitled to 2 free throw attempts

Double-Double - a player that records double digit stats in two categories (ex. 12reb and 18pts)

Double-Dribble - a player that dribbles the ball, picks up their dribble, then starts dribbling again is guilty of this infraction which results in a turnover

Dribble - to bounce the ball continuously

Dunk - to throw the ball through the hoop while simultaneously grabbing the rim

Fast Break - to attack the opposing team before they can set their defense

Field Goal - to make a basket

Flagrant Foul - also known as an *unsportmanlike* foul in which a player commits a foul without an attempt to play the ball

Foul - an infraction committed by using illegal physical contact

Four Point Play - to shoot and make a 3pt shot while being fouled, and then make the free throw

Free Throw - a free shot from the free throw line resulting from a foul

Key - the combination of the free throw lane and free throw circle

Kicking Violation - to use ones foot to deflect the ball

Lane - the rectangular area below the free throw line

Lay-Up - a close, simple shot in which a player usually uses the backboard

Perimeter - the area around the 3pt line

Pivot Foot - the foot a player has established as the foot that is anchored to the ground while their other foot is free to move. The pivot foot is established when a player catches the ball or when they pick up their dribble.

Post-Up - the position a player establishes near the key when they are trying to score close to the basket

Rebound - to grab the ball after a missed shot

Rim - the circular piece of iron mounted on the backboard that the basketball is meant to travel through to register a score

Shot-Clock - the time limit that an offensive team has to shoot the ball (NBA, WNBA, and FIBA teams have 24sec, Men's NCAA teams have 35sec, Women's teams have 30sec)

Technical Foul - a foul given for unsportsmanlike behavior or various other team infractions (ex. coach or player yelling at a referee, too many players on the court, extracurricular activity after play has stopped, calling timeout when you have none left, illegal substitutions, etc.)

Three-Point-Play - see "And 1"

Travel - to take more than two consecutive steps with the basketball, or to change an established pivot foot

Triple-Double - when a player registers double digit stats in three separate categories (ex. 10reb, 14asst, 20pts)

Turnover - a player that throws an errant pass or loses control of the ball so that the other team gains possession