

How to score—alternating possession

Starting the game

The game begins with a 'jump ball'. The referee court and a player from each side jump for it to tap the ball to a teammate.

After the start of the game.

After the initial jump ball, one side will gain control of the ball either by holding it or dribbling. Scoring bench officials should then set the possession arrow to the other team. This is known as 'alternating possession'.

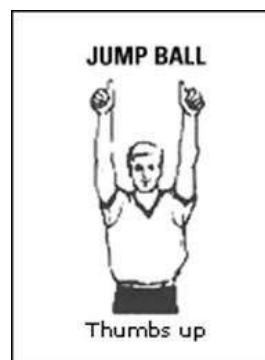
If there is a scramble for the ball with no one gaining control, there will be another jump ball in the centre circle. If there is a violation in the jump ball (such as the jumper catching the ball illegally or tapping it out of court) the other team is given the ball at the sideline. Bench officials should wait until a team gains control of the ball after this throw in and then change the arrow to the direction of the team which did not gain control from this throw in.

Jump ball situations

While there is only one jump ball where players jump for the ball, the rules specify a number of jump ball situations where possession of the ball changes. The most common of these is whenever there is a disputed possession of the ball, but there are others. For all jump ball situations, the referee will blow his or her whistle and give the jump ball signal of both arms up with a thumbs up. The referee will then look to the score bench where the arrow will indicate which team is entitled to possession.

Changing the arrow

Bench officials should wait until the passed-in ball, from a jump ball situation, touches a player on the court before they change the arrow's direction. If there is a violation by the player throwing the ball into the court (such as stepping into the court), the player forfeits possession. Bench officials should then change the alternate possession arrow to the opponent's basket and not change it again until the next jump ball situation.



Fouls

If there is a foul on the court, by either team, during the jump ball situation, the arrow does not change, because the resulting throw in is no longer a jump ball throw in, it is a throw in after a foul.

At half time and subsequent extra periods,

Because the teams change ends at half time or a subsequent extra period, the referees and the bench officials agree to flip the arrow to point in the direction of the team entitled to the ball. Since the first throw in at the beginning of the second half, or any extra period, is also a jump ball situation, the bench officials will need to flip the arrow again after that throw in touches a player on the court.