



# Quick Reference Guide To Contact In Wheelchair Basketball 2010

A summary of the basic principles of contact

Adapted from:

**Principles Of Contact In Wheelchair Basketball 2010**

By Ross Dewell

© Ross Dewell, Bateau Bay, Australia,  
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Written and Illustrated

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*Cover Photo: Courtesy of Wheelchair Basketball Canada and Kevin Bogetti-Smith Photography. Used with permission. Graphics added to photos are by Ross Dewell.*

## GUARDING - PATH



A player's **PATH** is located between the parallels drawn from either side of a player's chair from the side seat rails in the direction that the chair is travelling.

*Original photo by Matthew Wells for IWBF. Used by permission.  
Added graphic by Ross Dewell.*



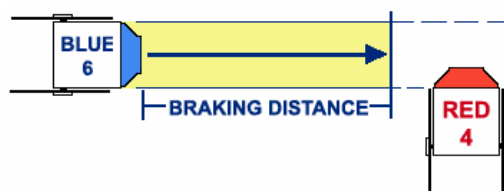
### 1. LEGAL POSITION v THE PLAYER WITH THE BALL: COVERING THE PATH



*Covering the path* refers to the action of a player who positions his chair across the path of an opponent so that the covering chair extends from one side of the path of his opponent across to the other side of the path.

If a player has *covered the path* of an opponent, he has established a **legal position**.

### 2. LEGAL POSITION v THE PLAYER WITH THE BALL: TIME AND DISTANCE TO AVOID CONTACT



In addition to covering the path, a defender can establish a legal position in the path of the player with the ball by stopping in the ball carrier's path and allowing the ball carrier time and distance to avoid contact, even though the defender has **not** covered the path of the ball carrier.

A general guide is that the defender should allow approximately one chair length for the ball carrier to avoid contact if the ball carrier is travelling slowly, or no more than two chair lengths if the ball carrier is travelling quickly. This distance is called the **braking distance**. The distance required in order to come to a stop depends upon the speed of the ball carrier.

### 3. GUARDING THE PLAYER WHO CONTROLS THE BALL

To establish a legal position in relation to **an opponent who has the ball**, a defender must either:

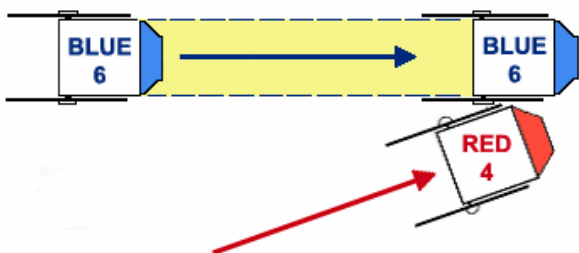
(a) Cover the opponent's path **or** (b) Give the opponent time and distance to avoid contact.

If a defender has *covered the path of the player who has the ball*, the defender is considered to have given **the player who has the ball** time to avoid contact. This concept is described by the following principle: ...

*If Player B had time to establish a legal position in the path of opponent Player A, then that opponent Player A had an equal chance to avoid contact.*

**NOTE:** A player may not attempt to occupy the space occupied by an opponent's wheelchair.

### 4. GUARDING AN OPPONENT WHO DOES NOT CONTROL THE BALL



The official must decide *who got there first?*

1. When deciding the responsibility for contact between a defender and **an opponent who does NOT have the ball** the IWBF official must determine "**Who got there first?**", subject to the other factors in Point 3 below.

2. In general, a player who reaches a position first before **an opponent who does NOT have the ball** is considered to have legally occupied that position.

3. However, there may be other factors to consider, such as *crossing-the-path*, head-on contact, screening, pivoting, and whether a defender who was initially stationary has moved into the braking area of a moving opponent – See each of these sections in this Quick Reference Guide.

## CROSSING THE PATH

**Crossing The Path** involves two opponents travelling *approximately* parallel and in the same direction.

A **Crossing The Path** situation occurs when one of these players **changes direction** and turns across into the path of the opponent.

It is this **change of direction** that is the difference between the rules for *Crossing The Path* and *Converging Paths*.

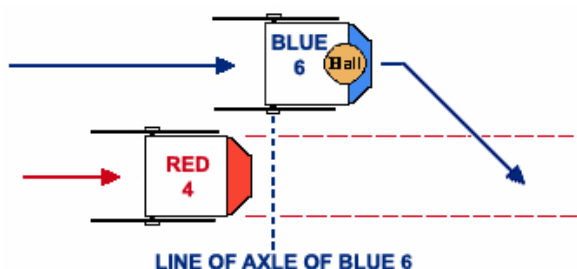
- **Crossing The Path** involves a change of direction.
- **Converging Paths** does **not** involve a change of direction. Both players maintain straight-line paths.

In this photo, BLUE 11 can legally *cross the path* of the WHITE defender. Blue 11's near-side rear axle is in front of the chair of the White defender.



Original photo by Matthew Wells for IWBF. Used by permission.  
Added graphic by Ross Dewell.

### LEGAL CROSSING THE PATH



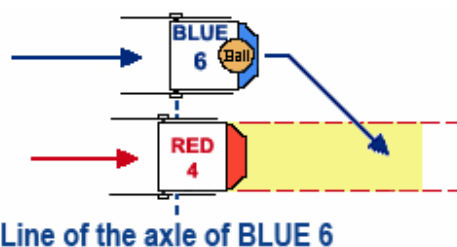
1. To cross the path **legally**, a player must not turn until he has his **nearside large axle in front of** (further up court than) the front of his opponent's chair.

2. The player who is crossing the path is required to give the opponent time and distance to avoid contact.

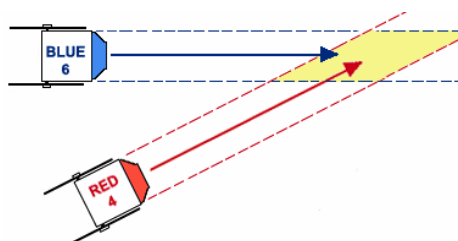
3. If the crossing player turns legally, he has right of way over the opponent. Any contact that results will be the responsibility of the opponent.

### ILLEGAL CROSSING THE PATH

The diagram on the right shows Blue 6 illegally *crossing the path* if contact occurs. Blue 6 will be legal if he *crosses the path* and enters the path of Red 4 **beyond** the braking distance of Red 4 because Red 4 would have had time to avoid contact.



## CONVERGING PATHS – Definition



1. **Converging Paths** refers to the paths of two opponents who are travelling in **straight** lines at an acute angle towards the same point.

2. There is **no change of direction** by either player.

3. This straight-line path **with no change of direction** is the difference between **Converging Paths** and **Crossing The Path**. *i.e.* .....

... A **Converging Paths** situation involves straight line paths, with **no change of direction** by either player, whereas **Crossing the Path** involves a change of direction by one of the players towards his opponent.

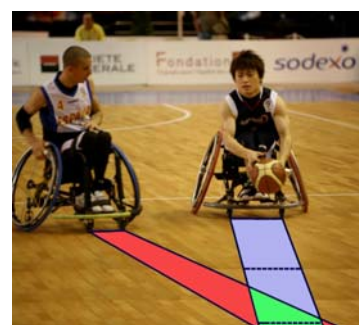


Photo by Matthew Wells for IWBF. Used by permission.

### SITUATION 1: Converging Paths: GUARDING THE PLAYER WHO CONTROLS THE BALL

The *Guarding* principles apply. It is the responsibility of the defender to obtain legal position, *i.e.* **cover the path**, or **allow time and distance** to avoid contact.

### SITUATION 2: Converging Paths: GUARDING A PLAYER WHO DOES NOT CONTROL THE BALL

A defender attempting to take a legal position in order to guard an opponent who does not have the ball only has to occupy that position before the opponent. The defender must also obey rules for special situations such as *Crossing the Path*, and for moving into a moving opponent's braking area from a close stationary position.

## GUARDING A STATIONARY OPPONENT With Or Without The Ball.



When guarding a **stationary** opponent, who may or may not have the ball, a defender can position his chair as close as possible short of contact. The defender must respect the following principles:

1. A stationary player is entitled to the space on the court occupied by his wheelchair.
2. An opponent may not place his wheelchair between the rear wheels of an opponent's chair.

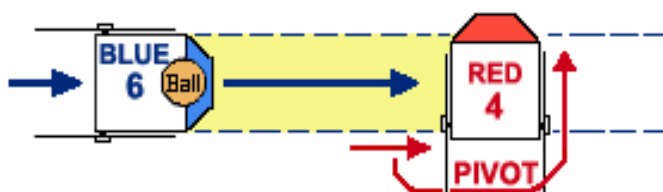
In this next photo (right), the WHITE defender has illegally pushed his footrests under the rear of the GREEN player's chair to prevent that player from moving. This is a HOLDING foul by WHITE.



Photos by Matthew Wells for IWBF. Used by permission.

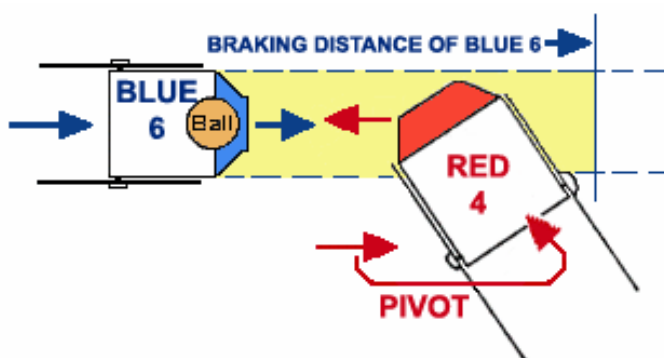
## PIVOTTING

### 1. PIVOTTING ACROSS THE PATH



A stationary **defensive** player who pivots into the path of an opponent who has the ball must obey the rules for *covering-the-path*. He must have *covered-the-path* before contact occurs unless his opponent was given sufficient time to avoid contact

### 2. PIVOTTING PAST SQUARE



A stationary defensive player Red 4 who, after pivoting and covering the path of the opposing ball carrier Blue 6, continues the pivoting movement **towards** the opponent and contacts that opponent has committed a foul

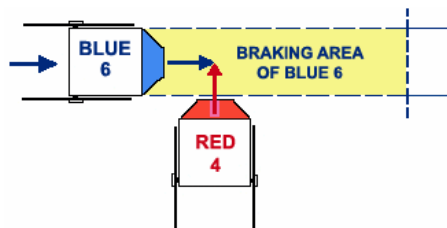
**If neither player has the ball**, then the referee has a judgement call to make.

There are a number of possible decisions: These are:

- (a) If **neither** player had the ball, then either player may be responsible for this contact. The player who has pivotted is entitled to pivot **on the spot**. However this will depend upon two things:
  - (i) Whether, while pivoting, the player who has pivotted maintained his position and pivotted basically on the spot, or ...
  - (ii) Whether while pivoting, the player who has pivotted significantly shifted his position to assume a new position on the floor. If so, this movement to a new position will be covered by the rules governing **LEGAL POSITION**.
- (b) It may be a "no call.  
For example, both players may have been attempting to reach a loose ball which had rolled between their chairs. If the contact occurred before either had secured the ball, and neither player did anything other than try to reach the ball, then nothing illegal may have occurred. The contact in this case may even be quite severe, but a 'no call' may still be the result.
- (c) It may be an illegal screen by the player who has pivotted. The Screener must be stationary.
- (d) It may be a pushing foul by either the player who has pivotted or his opponent.

# GUARDING A PLAYER WHO DOES NOT CONTROL THE BALL

## Wheelchair Tripping .....Changing From Stationary To Moving Defence



A defender who is stationary and who then moves from **within a chair length** into the **braking area** of a moving opponent who may or may not have the ball must allow that opponent time and distance to avoid contact.



**Comment:** I call this situation *Wheelchair Tripping* – see photo ----->

*Original photo: Courtesy of Wheelchair Basketball Canada and Kevin Bogetti-Smith Photography. Used with permission. Added graphic by Ross Dewell.*

## SCREENING

### 1. SCREENING A STATIONARY OPPONENT

- In IWBF basketball when a screen is set **either inside or outside** a stationary opponent's visual field, the screen can be set **as close as possible** short of contact.

**Comment:** This is different to the FIBA rule where the Screening rule varies according to whether the screen is set inside or outside the opponent's visual field.

- An important similarity to FIBA is that in IWBF basketball the screener's wheelchair must be stationary after setting the screen.

**Comment:** NOTE THESE VERY IMPORTANT POINTS:

- The requirement that the screener's wheelchair must remain stationary requires some explanation. If after the screener has set his screen and is stationary, the screener then moves to reset his screen because the opponent has moved, the screener again must allow the opponent time and distance to avoid contact in the new screening position.
- The official must decide whether he is judging a **Screening** situation (i.e. where the offensive player who sets the screen is stationary) or whether he is officiating a **Guarding** situation where both of the opposing players involved in the situation are moving. There are different rules for each of these situations.

### 2. SCREENING A MOVING OPPONENT

The first requirement of the screener in both IWBF and FIBA is that **the screener must remain stationary**.

In wheelchair basketball, the screener must *either* give the opponent time and distance to avoid contact, or the screener must *cover the path* of the opponent.

When a screen is set on a **moving** opponent, the official must consider the following:

- Did the screener establish a legal position in relation to the opponent?  
To do this, the screener must either *cover-the-path*, or allow time / distance to avoid contact.
- If the screener was moving head-on at the opponent, did the screener stop in time to allow the opponent time and distance to avoid contact?

If the screener fulfils these requirements, then the screen is legal.

However, If Player B sets a legal screen on a moving opponent Player A, then once Player A has moved close to the screener **within the braking distance** (ie, the distance required to avoid contact by stopping or changing direction), the screener Player B must keep his screen stationary. If the screener Player B then moves that screen and **significantly alters his position in relation to Player A**, then Player B may be responsible for any contact that results.

The FIBA concept of screens set either within or outside an opponent's visual field does not apply in IWBF basketball.

## THE ACT OF SHOOTING

### 1. WHEN IS A PLAYER CONSIDERED TO BE IN THE ACT OF SHOOTING?



Photo: Courtesy of Wheelchair Basketball Canada and Kevin Bogetti-Smith Photography. Used with permission.

The act of shooting begins when the player begins the motions that habitually precede the release of the ball on a shot at goal.

A player may be considered to be in the act of shooting if:

- (a) He holds the ball up in one or both hands with full or partial extension of the arm(s) and with the wrist cocked in the shooting position in preparation for shooting the ball ... OR ...
- (b) He holds the ball in one or both hands and commences an underhand scooping action in the direction of the basket



**White 8 is in the act of shooting**  
Photo by Matthew Wells for IWBF Used by permission.

- The wheelchair player who has **gathered the ball** in order to roll in for a lay-up is considered to be in the act of shooting in IWBF wheelchair basketball.
- An offensive rebounder who taps the ball towards the opponents' basket is considered to be in the act of shooting.

#### **Comments: Floor Position and The Opportunity To Shoot**

1. The player's floor position is a most important consideration for the officials when determining whether a player was in the act of shooting. A player who catches a defensive rebound and pivots, facing up court, holding the ball with his wrist cocked is unlikely to be attempting a full court shot, except perhaps in the final seconds of a period of play.

2. A player may not have started to actually push the ball towards the basket, but still may be considered to be in the act of shooting. For example, the player may have gathered the ball and be rolling the last few metres towards the basket and, in the judgement of the official, is ready to shoot.-If he is fouled in this situation, the official should normally award two shots. The official needs to **read the play** to judge whether the player was in both a floor position and/or a play situation where a shot was the most likely play.

3. The official calling the foul may sometimes be in doubt about whether the player with the ball was going to shoot or to pass. In these circumstances, if the foul has taken away the opportunity for the player with the ball to shoot, the official should give the shooter the benefit of the doubt and award two shots.

### 2. WHEN DOES THE ACT OF SHOOTING END?

In wheelchair basketball, the act of shooting continues until the shooter has completed the shooting action (follow through) and has regained his balance. If a shooter is fouled **while still off balance just as the shot has left his hand**, he is considered to be still in the act of shooting.

**The moment that the act of shooting ends will vary according to the degree of disability of the shooter.**

Judging the end of the act of shooting can be different in IWBF basketball when compared to FIBA basketball.

FIBA has a concept that the act of shooting continues after the shot is released until the player who has jumped to shoot returns to the floor. The equivalent concept in IWBF basketball is that the act of shooting continues after the shot is released until the shooter has regained his balance.

## HEAD-ON COLLISION

### 1. WITH THE BALL

A **moving** defender cannot collide head-on with the player who has the ball.

### 2. WITHOUT THE BALL

When neither player involved in a head-on collision has the ball, the IWBF official has to consider the actions of each of these players. Are the players chasing a loose ball? Is one setting a screen? Is the defender attempting to block the path of his opponent? This is not always an easy judgement to make. The official must *read the play*.

Photo: Courtesy of Kevin Bogetti-Smith Photography. Used with permission.



# STATIONARY AND MOVING DEFENCE - ON THE BALL AND OFF THE BALL

## RULES FOR DEFENDERS

### 1. Stationary Defender v Any Opponent, Both *On the Ball* and *Off the Ball*

If defender *Player B* takes any **stationary** position **anywhere** in opponent *Player A*'s path, or anywhere near the opponent, **giving *Player A* time to avoid contact**, then *Player A* is responsible for any resulting contact.

### 2. Moving Defender v The Player Who Controls The Ball

The defender must *cover the path* of the player with the ball, or allow that player *time to avoid contact*.

### 3. Moving Defender v An Opponent Who Does NOT Control The Ball

Defender *Player B* who is moving takes a position **in the path** of moving opponent *Player A* who does **not** have the ball. If *defender Player B* is still moving when contact occurs, then *Player B* must **reach the position first** in order to have established a legal guarding position.

*This means that Player B must have part of his wheelchair in the path of Player A. If he succeeds in doing this, then Player B is considered to have a legal position. Player B is entitled to occupy the position that he reached first. Player A must avoid contact with Player B.*

### 4. Stationary Defender Who Moves into the Braking Area of a Moving Opponent Who Does NOT Control The Ball

Stationary defender *Player B* must allow moving opponent *Player A* time to avoid contact if *Player B* moves into the braking area of *Player A* from a starting position within a chair length of the braking area of *Player A*. **Remember that neither of these players has the ball.**

**The following principles are extremely important when determining responsibility for contact:**

- The requirement that a moving defender must allow **the player with the ball** time and distance to avoid contact is considered to have been fulfilled **once the defender has established a legal floor position**.
- A defender who has **covered the path of the player with the ball** has reached a legal position, and, as a result, he has given the ball carrier the time and distance needed to avoid contact.

## PRINCIPLES FOR THE OFFENSIVE PLAYER WHO HAS THE BALL

### • THE PLAYER WITH THE BALL MUST ALWAYS EXPECT TO BE GUARDED.

This principle is the same as in FIBA rules.

- **The player with the ball must maintain control of his chair at all times in order to be able to stop or change direction to avoid a defender who has established a legal position in his path.**
- **Comment:** *If the player with the ball takes his hands off his wheels in order to shoot or pass, he puts at risk his ability to control his chair. He has chosen to relinquish his ability to use his hands to control his chair. The player with the ball remains responsible for the movement of his chair even though he has chosen to remove his hands from his wheels.*



Questions about wheelchair contact can be directed to: **Ross Dewell**

Email: ross\_dewell@optusnet.com.au .... or ....  
ross\_dewell@hotmail.com

For more detailed explanations of the principles of contact, read:

***Principles of Contact In Wheelchair Basketball 2010***

– available free. Contact Ross Dewell.

**Photos:** Thanks to Matt Wells, Kevin Bogetti-Smith, Jody Kingsbury and *Wheelchair Basketball Canada* for the use of photos. Readers should visit [wheelchairbasketball.ca](http://wheelchairbasketball.ca) to view more of Kevin Bogetti-Smith's great photos. Matt's action photos can be seen on the IWBF website.

# SUMMARY – The 3 Basic Principles of Contact

## FIRST BASIC PRINCIPLE OF CONTACT

### Guarding The Player Who Has The Ball

When a defender Player A attempts to establish a legal position in the path of an opponent Player B **who has the ball**, the official must consider the following principles:

#### 1. When both players are MOVING:

(a) Did defender Player A cover the path of ball carrier Player B before contact occurred?

... Or ...

(b) Was the ball carrier Player B given time and distance to avoid contact?

**Decision:** If the answer to *either* (a) or (b) is YES, then the defender Player A has legal position.

#### 2. When the player with the ball is STATIONARY:

The defender Player A can take a position as close as possible to opponent Player B, short of contact, without invading the space occupied by Player B.

## SECOND BASIC PRINCIPLE OF CONTACT

### Guarding A Player Who Does Not Have The Ball

When defender Player A attempts to establish a legal position in front of an opponent Player B **who does not have the ball**, the official must consider the following principles:

#### 1. When both players are MOVING:

Did Player A establish a legal position first by reaching the position before opponent Player B?

**Decision:** If the answer is YES, then Player A has legal position.

#### 2. When the player being guarded is STATIONARY:

Player A can take a position as close as possible to opponent Player B, short of contact, without invading the space occupied by Player B. [See also the rules for Screening- see Page H.1]

#### 3. When the defender MOVES after being STATIONARY:

If a stationary defender suddenly moves from within a chair length into the braking area of a moving opponent who does not have the ball, he must allow that opponent time to avoid contact.

## THIRD BASIC PRINCIPLE OF CONTACT

### Screening: Basic position

The player who sets a screen must be stationary.

#### 1. Screening A Stationary Opponent

The screener can set the screen anywhere as close as possible short of contact.

#### 2. Screening A Moving Opponent

The screener must either: (a) *Cover the path* of the opponent being screened, or  
(b) Allow the opponent *time and distance* to avoid contact.