

# Calling the Block/Charge, Getting it Right

## Part 2: What Makes a Defender Legal?

For a defender to be legal, the defender must get to the spot where contact occurs first and must do so legally. In most cases, that means the defender must have Legal Guarding Position (LGP).

How does a player obtain LGP?

First, a player must meet the definition of “Guarding” before they can obtain LGP. (also see Rule 4-7-2a)

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*Rule 4-23, ART 1 . . . **Guarding** is the act of legally placing the **body in the path** of an offensive opponent.*

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“Path” is not defined in the rulebook, but being in the path is (but not limited to):

- The actual direction in which the opponent is moving.
- Between the opponent and the basket.
- A position preventing the opponent from getting to where he/she would like to go.

Being in the path is generally NOT:

- Running alongside the opponent, shoulder to shoulder.
- Following an opponent to the basket.
- Standing on the wing, facing, or approaching a player running down the middle.

Second, the player must then meet the additional requirements of LGP.

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*Rule 4-23, ART. 2 . . . To **obtain** an initial legal guarding position:*

- a. The guard must have **both feet touching** the playing court.*
  - b. The front of the guard’s **torso must be facing** the opponent.*
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- Note that the feet must merely be touching the floor inbounds for an instant.
  - They do not need to be flat or set and may be extended outside the frame of the body.
- Note there is no mention of distance for LGP. LGP can be established at any distance.
- A player who is backpedaling is almost guaranteed to obtain LGP.

When must a player obtain LGP? (*See Rule 4-23-4 and 4-23-5*)

For a moving opponent without the ball, time and distance to avoid contact must be given, but never more than two steps.

For an opponent that is stationary OR has the ball, LGP can be obtained at any time and any position short of contact. Under NFHS rules, the defender does not need to give such an opponent ANY room to move.

\*\*If the opponent is airborne, the guard must be “in the path” before the opponent is airborne.

For an airborne opponent, the “path” becomes only the direction the opponent is jumping.

*Once the above conditions are met, even for just the briefest moment, the defender has obtained LGP.*