



# Principles of Contact In Wheelchair Basketball

**Ross Dewell**

**Endorsed by the  
IWBF Technical Commission**





# Introduction

This latest edition of *Principles of Contact in Wheelchair Basketball* has been upgraded with new diagrams and photos. Although the book has been updated, the theory and principles it describes and explains remain unchanged.

*Path Theory* is firmly established as the basis for the contact rules in IWBF wheelchair basketball. The principles of Path Theory are as relevant and comprehensive as they were when they were first released.

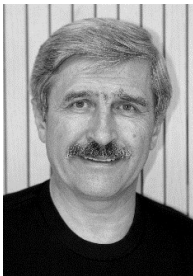
Everything in this latest edition is consistent with **IWBF Rule 6: Fouls**.

Most importantly, there are no changes to the basic contact principles of Path Theory.

*Principles of Contact in Wheelchair Basketball* is the result of a project that I began in Australia the 1980s. I distributed some draft copies at the IWBF Gold Cup in Edmonton in 1994. I distributed the *First Edition* of this book in 1996 at the Atlanta Paralympic Games. I followed this by writing the wheelchair basketball contact rules (*Fouls*) for IWBF, based upon my new contact principles. Those rules appeared as **Rule 8: Fouls** in the *Official Wheelchair Basketball Rules 1998-2002* rulebook. *Principles of Contact in Wheelchair Basketball* was published as an Appendix in that edition and in later editions of the rule book.

I have published several editions of *Principles of Contact in Wheelchair Basketball* since the first edition was released in 1996. It has become the international reference book for contact and fouls in wheelchair basketball.

In 1996, my new contact principles defined fouls and contact situations in wheelchair basketball in wheelchair-specific terms for the first time, using the terms and principles of what I called *Path Theory*.



During the 1980s, I developed the concepts of *Path Theory* from two sources – firstly, from reading, and discussing with him, the early papers about contact in wheelchair basketball, written, and co-written, by Dr Horst Strohkendl for the ISMG Basketball Section; and secondly, from new basic principles of contact that I had developed on my own in Australia during the late 1970's. I gradually developed the idea of describing wheelchair contact in terms of the path travelled by the wheelchair.

*Path Theory* is a comprehensive and more complete way of interpreting Dr Strohkendl's early descriptions of contact situations as they apply to the modern game. *Path Theory* describes many common wheelchair contact situations which had not been adequately defined in the existing ISMG basketball rules.

**Horst Strohkendl**

*Path Theory* first recognised that contact involving **moving** players could be described in **five** basic situations:

- **Converging Paths** Two opponents travelling in straight lines at an acute angle towards the same point.
- **Square On** A player travelling at right angles towards the path of an opponent.
- **Head On** A player travelling head on towards an opponent.
- **Curving Paths** A player moving in a curving path with an opponent locked chair to chair.
- **Pivoting** A stationary player who pivots into the *Path* of a moving opponent.

To those five situations, I further developed Dr Strohkendl's ideas on the situation that he called *crossing the Path* by defining that situation using the basic concepts of *Path Theory*.

Today, *Path Theory* continues to provide, within a consistent and cohesive theoretical framework, a clear definition of what a player must do to establish a legal position in all of the common wheelchair basketball contact situations. *Path Theory* remains sound in the face of all of the developments and improvements in wheelchair design and technology that have changed the nature of play in our great game.

The principles of *Path Theory* have survived all of these changes with no anomalies or exceptions.

*Path Theory*, and its principles of contact for wheelchair basketball, remain as relevant now as they were when I first introduced those principles to IWBF in 1996 at the Atlanta Paralympics.

## Ross Dewell

B. Ed Studies (Newcastle), OAM.



## Foreword

### Greg Love

Former Secretary General  
IWBF Asia-Oceania Zone

Ross Dewell has been involved with wheelchair basketball refereeing at the top level in Australia since 1971 and was an international referee from 1986 till 2007. His contribution to refereeing and the technical aspects of international wheelchair basketball (IWBF) is as significant as was Dr. John Bunn's work for NCAA and FIBA in the late fifties.

Originally and going back to 1986, Ross was very concerned that a definitive text dealing with contact was needed in Australia to assist referees who in many cases were isolated from the mainstream of IWBF basketball. The project however evolved into one of assisting referees, players and coaches throughout the world.

Since the first edition of this book was published, Ross has had an ongoing commitment to upgrade the text and illustrations as the IWBF contact rules have been further defined. In fact to a large degree Ross has been of influence in helping the further defining of the rules process.

During the six years that that Ross was a member of the IWBF Technical Commission, his major project was to guide the rewriting of the contact section of the IWBF Rule Book. His simple premise was that *'if Player B had time to get there, then his opponent Player A had an equal chance to avoid contact'*. Drawing on IWBF and FIBA references, Ross continues to prove that premise to be true.

It is with great pleasure that I recommend the book to officials and players who wish guidance to go forward within the game.

**Greg Love**

# Principles of Contact in Wheelchair Basketball

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**Note:** All references to rules articles refer to the **IWBF Official Basketball Rules for Men and Women**, other than where reference is made to the **FIBA Official Basketball Rules**. IWBF and FIBA rule references are correct as of June 2022. This book presumes that the reader is familiar with the FIBA principles of contact.

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## Section A

# Definitions

1. Path
2. Braking Distance and Braking Area
3. Covering the Path
4. Converging Paths
5. Crossing the Path
6. The Wheelchair Cylinder

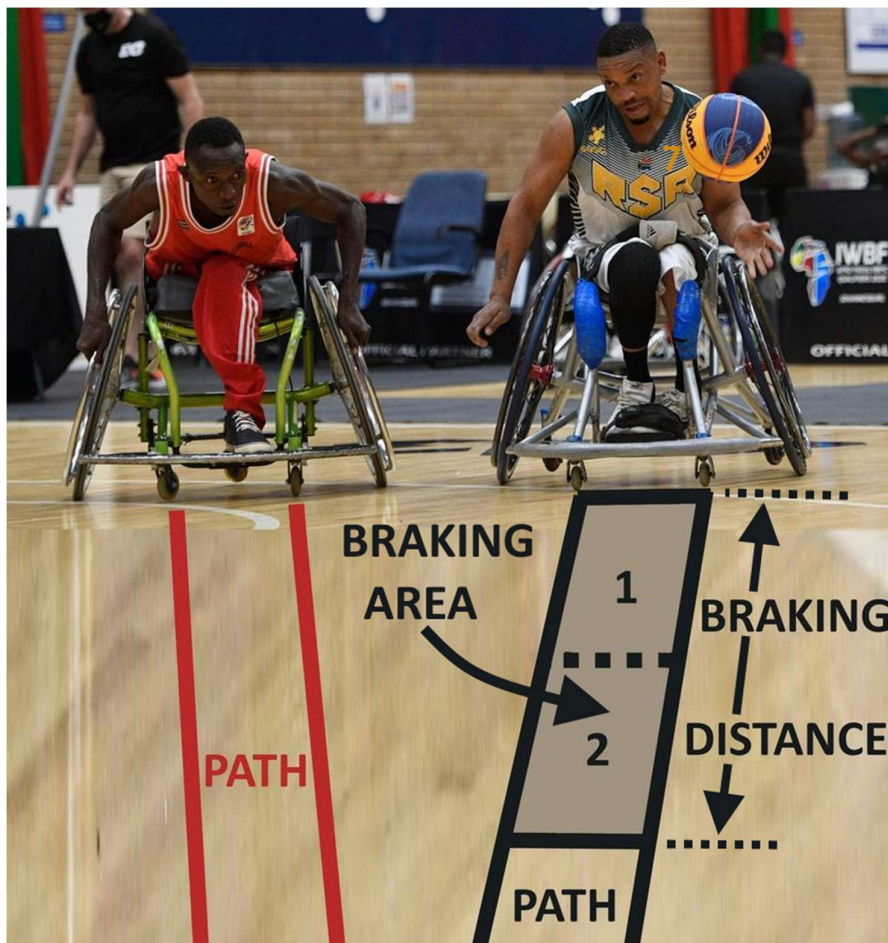


Photo: Wheelchair Basketball South Africa.  
Added graphics by Ross Dewell.

# DEFINITIONS

## 1. Definition: THE PATH OF THE WHEELCHAIR

A player's path is the floor area between the parallel lines drawn from either side of the wheelchair's **seat** in the direction that the chair is travelling. The player may be moving forwards or backwards.

Figure A.1



Figure A.2



The width of a player's path equals the **width of the seat** of the player's wheelchair.

Reference: IWBF Basketball Rules Article 33

**Comment:**

The width of the seat of the wheelchair remains relatively consistent over time, even with the development of new chair designs and structures. This means that the definition of PATH remains consistent over time.



Photo: Matthew Wells for IWBF. Added graphic by Ross Dewell

## 2. Definitions: BRAKING AREA and BRAKING DISTANCE

### Braking Distance

The **Braking Distance** is the **shortest** distance that a moving wheelchair needs to be able to stop.

The **distance needed to stop** depends upon the speed that the wheelchair is travelling when the player starts to brake.

The distance needed to stop is never more than ONE chair-length for a chair that is moving slowly, or TWO chair lengths for a chair that is moving quickly.

### Braking Area

The **Braking Area** is that part of a player's path immediately in front of his moving wheelchair in the direction that the chair is moving and along which the chair will travel while coming to a stop.

The braking area is the green area in this photo (right).

Figure A.3

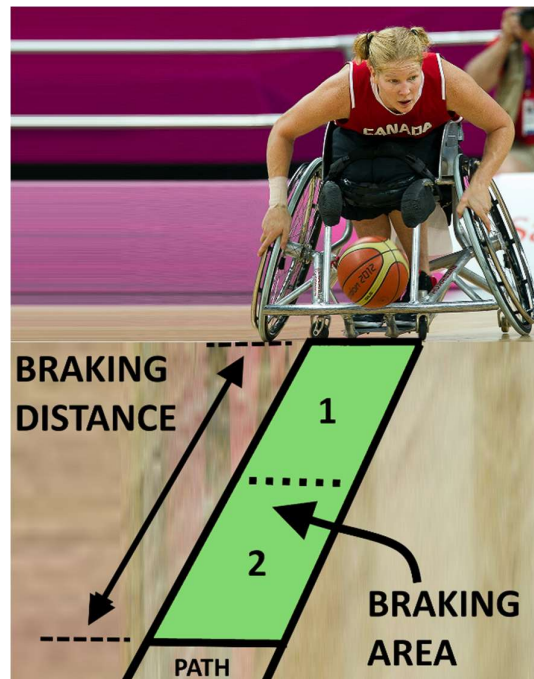
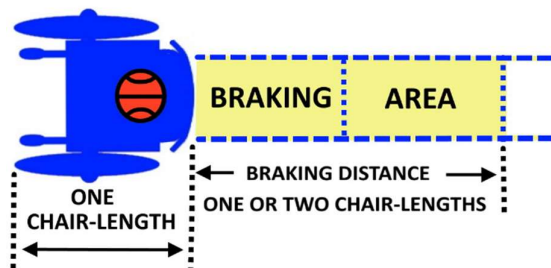


Photo: Kevin Bogetti-Smith. Graphics by Ross Dewell

### 3. Definition: COVER THE PATH: LEGAL POSITION v THE PLAYER WHO HAS THE BALL

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

- (a) *Cover the path* of the opponent OR (b) Give the opponent time and distance to avoid contact.

**Covering the path** refers to the action of a player (**RED 4 in Figures A.4 and A.5**) who positions his chair across the path of an opponent so that the chair extends from one side of the path of the opponent across to the other side of the path. The path can be covered with any part of the wheelchair, including the rear wheels.

1. If a defender *covers the path* of an opponent who has the ball, he is considered to have allowed that opponent enough time and distance to stop or change direction to avoid contact.

2. 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.

3. If a player has *covered the path* of an opponent who has the ball, he has established a legal position and the player with the ball must avoid contact.

In *Figures A.4 and A.5*, RED 4 has wheeled into the path of BLUE 6 and has *covered the path* of BLUE 6. RED 4 has legal position. BLUE 6 must avoid contact

*Figure A.4*



*Figure A.5*



*Photos below: Matthew Wells for IWBF.  
Added graphics by Ross Dewell*



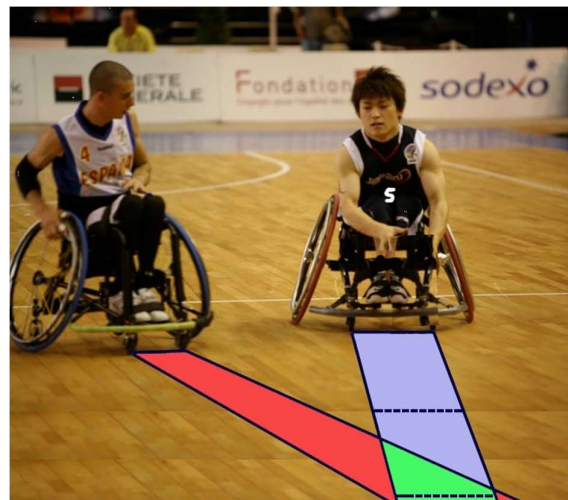
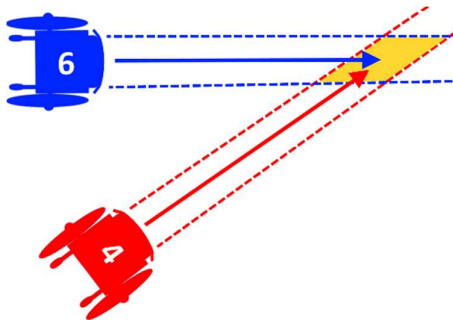
In the photo (above), BLUE 11 has *covered the path* of WHITE 9. BLUE 11 has a legal position. WHITE 9 must avoid contact.

(Reference: IWBF Rulebook Article 33.4)

### 4. Definition: CONVERGING PATHS

**CONVERGING PATHS** refers to the paths of two opponents who are travelling in **straight** lines at an angle towards the same place on the floor. There is **no change of direction** by either player.

*Figure A.6* *Converging Paths*



In this photo (above right) WHITE 4 and BLACK 5 are on **Converging Paths**. The fact that the players maintain straight-line paths with **no change of direction** is the difference between the two situations called **Converging Paths** and **Crossing The Path**.

**Crossing the path** involves a **change of direction** by one of the players (See Section E).

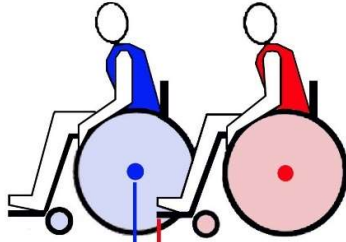
## 5. Definition: CROSSING THE PATH

A **Crossing The Path** situation occurs when:

- Two opponents are travelling close together (closer than braking distance) and are either travelling on Converging paths or are travelling *approximately* parallel and in the same direction.
- One of these players **changes direction** and turns across into the path of the opponent.

A player can legally change direction and cross into the path of an opponent once he has his near-side axle further forward than the front of his opponent's chair.

Figure A.7



Blue has his near side axle further forward than the front of Red's chair

In Figure A.7, BLUE can legally cross into the path of RED.

In Figure A.8, BLUE 6 can legally cross into the path of RED 4.

BLUE 11 (right), can legally cross the path of WHITE 4.

BLUE 11 has his axle further forward than the chair of WHITE 4.

Figure A.8

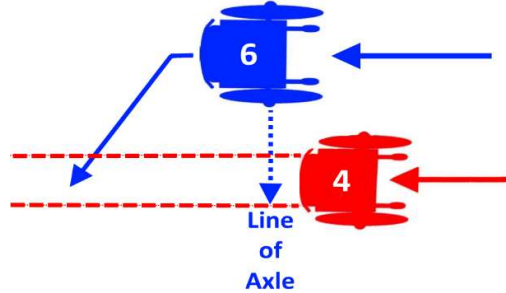


Photo: Matthew Wells for IWBF

## 6. Definition: THE WHEELCHAIR CYLINDER

The wheelchair **cylinder** is the space occupied by the wheelchair. It includes the air space vertically above that wheelchair.

A player is entitled to occupy the area of his wheelchair **cylinder** and the airspace vertically above that cylinder. A player can extend his arms above his head within his wheelchair cylinder. This may mean that his arms extend forward of the trunk of his body but still legally remain within his wheelchair cylinder.

Diagram (right): IWBF Playing Rules

A defensive player is entitled to extend his arms above his head within his cylinder to defend a shot or a pass by an opponent. He can move his arms around within that airspace but he is not entitled to change his arm position in order to contact the arms of an opponent who has followed through into his cylinder on a shot or a pass. This is the same principle as in FIBA basketball.

In this photo (bottom left), the RED defender has extended her arm up legally and is reaching forwards within her cylinder. She is not making contact with GREEN 9. If she reaches into the cylinder of GREEN 9 and contacts or holds GREEN 9's arm(s), and causes a disadvantage, RED will be responsible for that illegal contact.



In the next photo (right), Yellow 5 is reaching into the cylinder of the RED shooter. If Yellow 5 contacts the shooter's arms and creates a disadvantage, he has fouled the RED shooter.

An offensive player who shoots or passes can follow through with his hands and arms into the cylinder area of an opponent without making contact that disadvantages the opponent.

Photos: Wheelchair Basketball South Africa. Added graphics by Ross Dewell.



Wheelchair Cylinder





## Section B

# Legal Defence

### Two Basic Guarding Situations:

1. Guarding The Player Who *Controls* The Ball
2. Guarding An Opponent Who Does Not Have The Ball
  - Moving Defence
  - Stationary Defence



*Photo by Matthew Wells for IWBF.*

## GUARDING: TWO BASIC SITUATIONS

**TERMS:** **ON BALL** play means play that involves a player who has the ball.  
**OFF BALL** play means a play where no player involved in that play has the ball.

The IWBFB contact rules describe TWO basic **Guarding** situations. These are:

1. Guarding The Player Who Controls The Ball (IWBFB Rulebook - Article 33.4)
2. Guarding A Player Who Does Not Control The Ball (IWBFB Rulebook- Article 33.5)

### 1. GUARDING THE PLAYER WHO CONTROLS THE BALL - COVER THE PATH

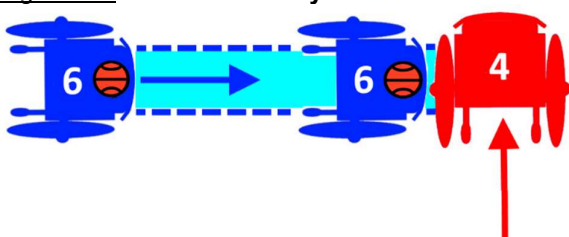
To establish a legal position in relation to **an opponent who has the ball**, a defender must either:

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

#### Defender covers the path

In *Figures B.1, B.2 and B.3*, BLUE 6 has the ball.

*Figure B.1: Path covered by RED 4*



RED 4 pushes into the path of BLUE 6 and *covers the path* of BLUE 6. Because the path of BLUE 6 has been covered, BLUE 6 has been given equal time and distance to avoid contact.

BLUE 6 runs into RED 4.

**Decision:** Charging Foul by BLUE 6.

RED 4 has *covered the path* of BLUE 6.

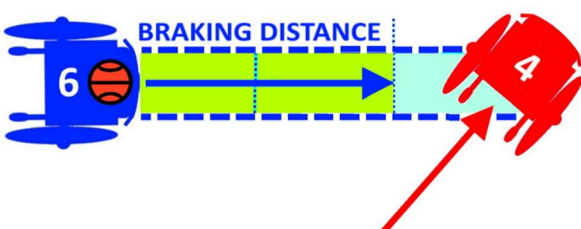
*Reference:* IWBFB Rulebook - Article 33.4.3; 33.4.2

This photo (*right*) shows the situation in *Figure B.1*. The Yellow defender has covered the path of BLUE 8 who has the ball. BLUE 8 will be responsible for any chair contact.



*Photo: Wheelchair Basketball Sth Africa. Added Graphic: Ross Dewell*

*Figure B.2 Path covered by RED 4*



In *Figure B.2* and *Figure B.3*, BLUE 6 has the ball. RED 4 has covered the path of BLUE 6.

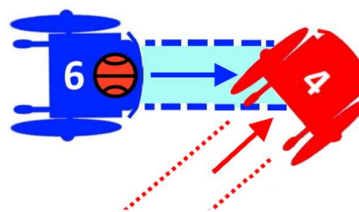
BLUE 6 will be responsible for any chair contact with RED 4.

If RED 4 maintains a legal stationary position, BLUE 6 must avoid chair contact.

RED 4 can move forward if he has a clear straight-line path out of the path of BLUE 6 that avoids head-on contact with BLUE 6. RED 4 retains a legal position while moving forward on that clear path.

BLUE must avoid contact with RED 4 during RED 4's move out of BLUE 6's path.

*Figure B.3 Path covered by RED 4*



## Defender covers the path

In these two photos, the defenders RED 7 and BLUE 4 have *covered the path* of the players who have the ball. Because their paths were covered, GREEN 7 and BLUE 4 had an equal opportunity to stop or change direction to avoid contact.

In *Photo 1*, both players are moving. The defender RED 7 has his chair legally positioned across the path of his moving opponent, GREEN 7. This is a Charging foul by GREEN 7.

In *Photo 2*, BLUE 4 has his chair legally positioned across the path of his moving opponent WHITE 9. This is a Charging foul by WHITE 9.



Photos: Wheelchair Basketball South Africa. Added graphics - Ross Dewell

***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.***

## LEGAL POSITION BUT NOT FACING THE OPPONENT



A defender's wheelchair does not have to be facing his opponent to establish a legal position.

The defender only has to occupy a legal position, on or off the ball. It does not matter which direction his wheelchair is facing.

In these photos, RED 7 (*left*) and GREEN 7 (*right*) are not facing their opponents, but they both have legal chair positions.



Photo: Wheelchair Basketball South Africa

Photo: Basketball Australia

In Photo 1 (*above*), RED 7 has *covered the path* of WHITE who has the ball. RED 7 cannot reverse into WHITE. In Photo 2 (*right*), GREEN 7 is stationary. GREEN 7 remains in a legal position as long as he does not hold his opponent's chair by pulling backwards into WHITE 2.

# TIME AND DISTANCE TO AVOID CONTACT

## THE PLAYER WITH THE BALL NEEDS DISTANCE TO STOP

The wheelchair basketball player has to use his hands to brake or to stop. IWBFB rules allow the player who has the ball Time and Distance to stop. The **Braking Distance** that he is allowed to stop or change direction to avoid contact is one or two chair lengths, depending on the speed he is moving.



If a defender has covered the path of the player who has the ball, he is considered to have allowed that player enough distance to brake or change direction to avoid contact. Logically, that means that once the defender has covered the path, the braking distance of the player with the ball ended just short of the defender,

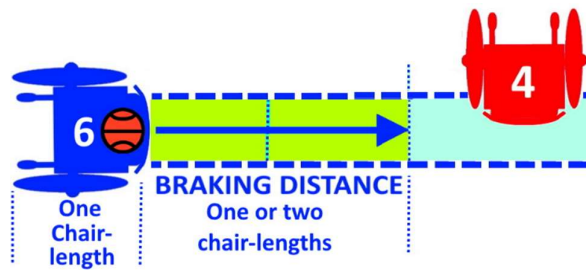
In this photo (*left*), GREY 7 has enough Braking Distance to stop. If this space is taken away from him by a defender who moves into his braking area **without covering his path**, then that defender will be responsible for any chair contact that occurs.

*Comment: GREY 7 cannot stop unless he brakes. To do this, he must release his hold on the ball to free his hands by bouncing the ball or by putting it on his lap or by passing it or shooting it. He can either hold the ball to pass or shoot, or he can stop, but he cannot do both at the same time. If he holds the ball in one hand and brakes on one wheel only with the other hand, he will change direction.*

Photo: Wheelchair Basketball South Africa. Graphics - Ross Dewell

## STOPPING LEGALLY IN THE PATH *BEYOND* THE BRAKING DISTANCE AND WITHOUT COVERING THE PATH

Figure B.4 Time to avoid contact



BLUE 6 has the ball. RED 4 is **stationary** in a LEGAL position in the path of BLUE 6. RED 4 has only part of his chair in the path of BLUE 6, and he is not covering the path.

But RED 4 has stopped **beyond** the braking distance that BLUE 6 needs to avoid contact.

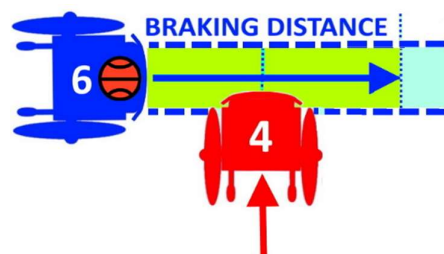
BLUE 6 continues to move a straight line and crashes into RED 4.

**Decision:** Charging Foul by BLUE 6, who had time and distance to avoid contact.

References: IWBFB Rulebook - Articles 33.4.1; 33.4.3; 33.5.1.2

## STOPPING ILLEGALLY IN THE PATH *INSIDE* THE BRAKING DISTANCE

Figure B.5



**BLUE 6 has the ball.**

Opponent RED 4 pushes part of his chair into the path of BLUE 6 without covering the path.

RED 4 stops, without giving BLUE 6 time to stop or change direction. BLUE 6 runs into RED 4.

**Decision:**

RED 4 is responsible for this contact.

RED 4 has committed a Blocking foul.

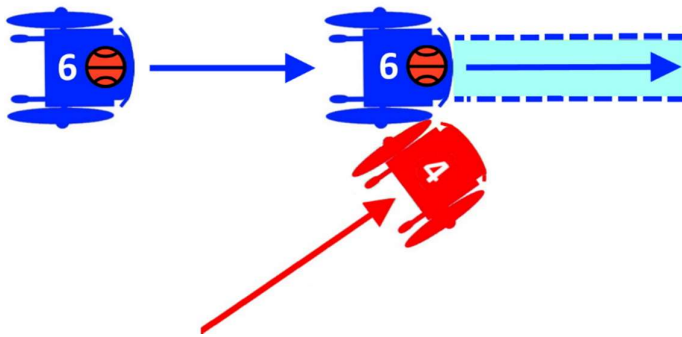
RED 4 has illegally **BLOCKED** the forward progress of BLUE 6.

Reference: IWBFB Rulebook - Article 33.4.3

Also see Page D.3 - Wheelchair Tripping

## Guarding the Ball (ON BALL Defence)

Figure B.6



BLUE 6 has the ball.  
RED 4 and BLUE 6 are on Converging Paths.

RED 4 runs into the side of BLUE 6.

RED 4 has failed to establish a legal position in the path of the ball carrier BLUE 6.

**Decision:** Pushing foul by RED 4.  
*Reference: IWBFB Rulebook - Article 33.4.3*

In *Figure B.6*, BLUE 6 who has the ball must make a decision before he reaches RED 4 about whether the defender RED 4 is likely to establish a legal position in his path. BLUE 6 must decide whether he should continue on his path and gamble that he will beat RED 4 to the position that RED 4 is trying to establish, or whether he should avoid contact with RED 4 by either stopping or changing direction.

The defender RED 4 has to make a similar decision. He must decide whether he can he *cover the path*, or whether he should stop or change direction to avoid possible contact.

### Defender RED 4 fails to cover the path

Figure B.7



BLUE 6 has the ball.  
BLUE 6 and RED 4 are on **converging paths**.  
**Neither player changes direction.**

RED 4 enters the path of BLUE 6, without *covering the path* of BLUE 6. BLUE 6 runs into the side of RED 4's chair.

**Decision:** This is a Blocking Foul by defender RED 4.  
RED 4 has failed to *cover-the-path* of the player who has the ball.  
RED 4 has illegally **BLOCKED** the forward progress of BLUE 6.  
*Reference: IWBFB Rulebook - Article 33.3*



Photo: Wheelchair Basketball South Africa

In this photo, defender BLUE 15 is committing a foul similar to the foul shown in *Figure B.7*.

Both of these players are moving forward.

BLUE 15 has rolled **part** of the way across the path of the WHITE team player who has the ball and he has failed to cover the path.

BLUE 15 is illegally Blocking the forward progress of the player who has the ball.

This is a **BLOCKING** Foul by BLUE 15.

To establish a legal position in the path of the player who has the ball, BLUE 15 must either cover his path **OR** establish a legal position beyond the braking distance of the player who has the ball.

## MAINTAINING A LEGAL POSITION WHILE MOVING

After having covered the path of an opponent who has the ball, a defender can move in order to **maintain** his legal position in that opponent's path. (*Reference: IWBFB Rulebook – Article 33.4.3*)

## DEFENCE RESPONSIBILITY - MAINTAIN CHAIR CONTROL WHILE MOVING



A player, with or without the ball, is expected to maintain control of his chair at all times so that he can avoid contact with an opponent who has established a legal position in his path.

A player who takes both hands off his wheels has ignored his responsibility to maintain control of his chair. If he contacts a legally-positioned opponent while he is not controlling his chair, then he is responsible for that contact.

Both players in this photo are moving forwards. Defender RED 7 has taken his hands off his wheels. He cannot stop his chair's forward movement.

RED 7 is illegally PUSHING into the side of the chair of GREEN 13 who has the ball.

Photo: Wheelchair Basketball South Africa

Note: Some high point players can change the direction in which their chair is moving by swivelling their hips. Most lower point players need to brake or push on a wheel to change direction.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PLAYER WHO HAS THE BALL

In the IWBFBasketball Rulebook, Article 33.4.2 states:

*The player with the ball must expect to be guarded and must be prepared to stop or change direction whenever an opponent takes a legal guarding position in front of him.*

When the player with the ball sees a defender moving to get into his path, he must decide either to continue on his path and gamble on whether he can reach the spot first before the defender, or whether he should brake or change direction to avoid contact.



In this photo, GREEN 6 is rolling forwards towards the GREY defender who has covered the path of GREEN 6.

Because the defender was able to cover the path of GREEN 6, GREEN 6 has been given equal time and distance to avoid contact. It is the responsibility of GREEN 6 to avoid chair contact with the GREY defender who has covered her path.

GREEN 6 has taken her hands off her wheels so she cannot stop.

### Summary

1. **The player with the ball must expect to be guarded.**  
(Reference: IWBFBasketball Rulebook - Article 33.4.2)
2. **The player with the ball must avoid contact with any opponent who has established a legal position in his path.**
3. **The player with the ball must maintain control of his chair at all times to avoid contact with legal defence.**

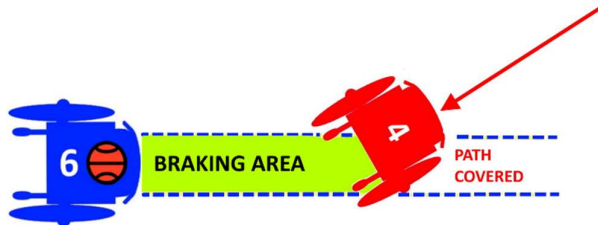
Photo: Wheelchair Basketball South Africa. Added graphic by Ross Dewell

## WHEELING IN BACKWARDS TO COVER THE PATH

A defender can wheel in backwards to *cover the path* of the opponent who has the ball, but the defender must fulfil the same requirements as if he had moved forwards into the opponent's path. He must allow the player with the ball enough time and distance to avoid contact. The direction that the defender's chair is facing is not relevant. When *covering-the-path*, there is **no** physical difference in the distance travelled when moving forwards or backwards to establish legal position.

### Examples: Defender RED 4 pushes backwards into the path of ball carrier BLUE 6.

*Figure B.8: Covering the Path - Moving Backwards TOWARDS the player who has the ball*



In *Figure B.8*, RED 4 has wheeled in backwards to legally *cover the path* of opponent BLUE 6 who has the ball.

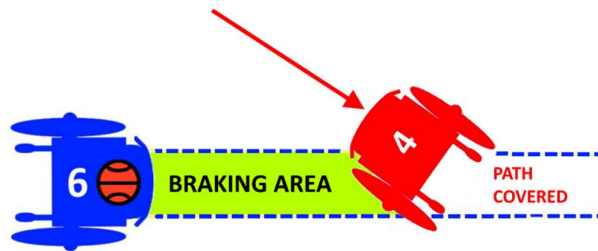
#### IMPORTANT:

Once the path of BLUE 6 is covered, RED 4 cannot continue to roll backwards towards BLUE 6 and cause a head-on chair collision.

When covering the path of an opponent who has the ball, it does not matter which part of the defender's wheelchair is used to cover the path. In *Figure B.8*, part of RED 4's right wheel is legally covering the path.

It also does not matter which direction the defender's wheelchair is facing, or whether the defender moves forwards or backwards to reach a legal position. In *Figure B.8*, RED 4 is facing backwards in a legal position.

*Figure B.9: Covering the Path by moving Backwards on a Converging Path with the player who has the ball*



In *Figure B.9*, BLUE 6 has the ball.

RED 4 has *covered the path* of BLUE 6 by wheeling backwards on a Converging Path across the path of BLUE 6. Part of the large left wheel of RED 4 is covering some of the path of BLUE 6.

RED 4 has a legal position.

BLUE 6 will be responsible for chair contact.

*Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.3*

This photo (*right*) shows the situation in *Figure B.9*.

Defender WHITE 15 is wheeling backwards on a Converging Path towards the path of RED 12.

WHITE 15 must make a decision:

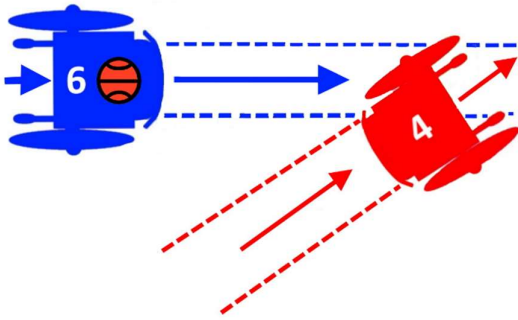
*"Will I be able to cover the path of RED 12?  
Or should I stop or change direction to avoid contact?"*

*Photo: Wheelchair Basketball Canada.*



## Example - WHEELING IN BACKWARDS - PATH COVERED

Figure B.10 Converging Paths: Charging foul.



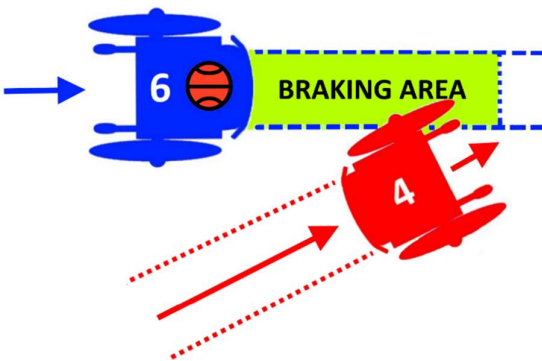
Defender RED 4 has wheeled backwards on a converging path into the path of BLUE 6 who has the ball. RED 4 has legally covered the path of BLUE 6.

BLUE 6 crashes into RED 4.

**Decision:** BLUE 6 is responsible for contact. RED 4 established legal position by covering the path of BLUE 6. (Reference: IWBFB Rulebook - Article 33.4)

## Example - WHEELING IN BACKWARDS - PATH NOT COVERED

Figure B.11 Converging Paths: Blocking Foul.



Defender RED 4 has wheeled backwards on a converging path into the path of BLUE 6 who has the ball. RED 4 has his near-side axle in the path of BLUE 6.

BLUE 6 crashes into RED 4 before RED 4 has covered the path of BLUE 6.

**Decision:** Blocking foul by RED 4. RED 4 has not covered the path of BLUE 6. RED 4 has BLOCKED the forward progress of BLUE 6. (Reference: IWBFB Rulebook Articles 33.3; 33.4)

## CHAIR DESIGN AND THE WIDTH OF THE PATH

The width of the player's path is equal to the width of the player's seat.

The front vertical rails of White 10 (right) extend down vertically from the edge of the seat to the horizontal bar.

Not all chairs have vertical front rails. Some angle inwards.

In the second photo (below) the green angled front vertical rails of the GREEN chair bend in towards the player's footrest.



They do not line up with the width of the player's seat.

The white arrows show that the vertical rails do not line up with the width of the player's path.

The dotted yellow lines line up with the outer edges of the seat.

Photos: Wheelchair Basketball South Africa.

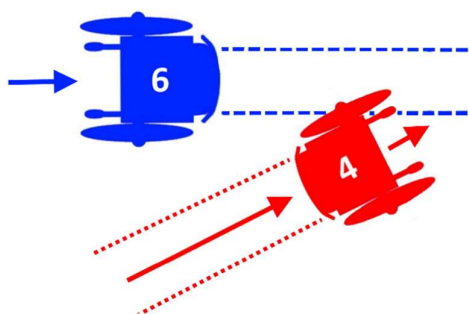




## NOTE THIS SITUATION - OFF BALL CONVERGING PATHS

In an *Off Ball Converging Paths* situation, there is no requirement to *cover the path* of your opponent. When neither player has the ball, a player only has to reach a position before his opponent. (But see *Section G: Screening*)

Figure B.12



This is the same chair movement as in *Figure B.11*, but this time neither player has the ball.

This is an OFF BALL Converging Paths situation. RED 4 wheels in backwards and reaches a position in the path of BLUE 6 before BLUE 6 gets that position.

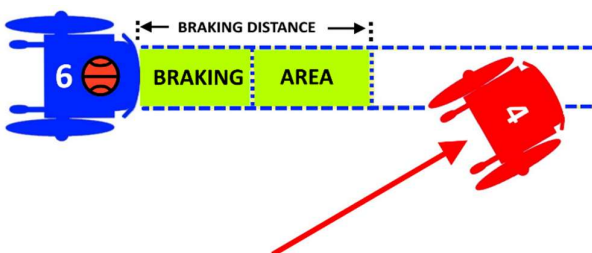
If BLUE 6 runs into RED 4, BLUE 6 will be responsible for chair contact.

In this OFF BALL situation, RED does not have to cover the path of BLUE 6.

## NOTE THIS SITUATION - ON BALL CONVERGING PATHS

Defender enters the path of BLUE 6 *beyond the braking distance* and at an acute angle

Figure B.13: Acute angle - Time and Distance



BLUE 6 has the ball. RED 4 is in the path of BLUE 6, but has not *covered the path* of BLUE 6.

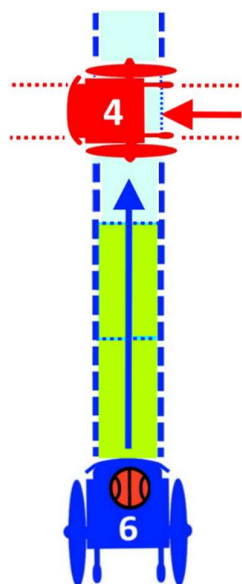
RED 4 has entered the path of BLUE 6 at an acute angle, well beyond the braking distance that BLUE 6 needs to stop or change direction to avoid contact.

BLUE 6 will be responsible for any chair contact that occurs.

If RED 4 stops where he is, he has a legal position. If BLUE 6 runs into the back of RED 4, this would be a Charging foul by BLUE 6. *Reference: IWBFB Rulebook - Article 33.3)*

## CHANGING DIRECTION – CHANGING THE PATH TO A NEW PATH.

Figure B.14



In *Figure B.14 (left)* RED 4 legally moves across the path of opponent BLUE 6 beyond the braking distance of BLUE 6 who has the ball.

In *Figure B.15 (right)* BLUE 8 becomes aware that he is in danger of contacting RED 4.

BLUE 6 changes direction and his new path will cross the path of RED 4 as RED 4 leaves the path of BLUE 6.

BLUE 6's new path will avoid the section of his old path that RED 4 legally had covered.

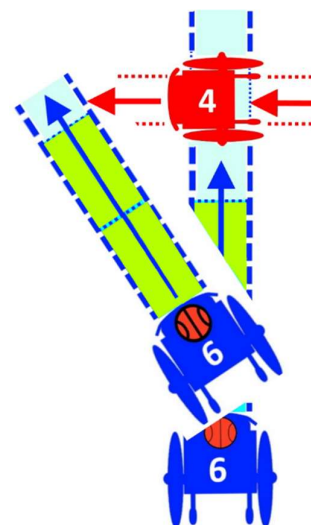
BLUE 6 is entitled to continue on his new path.

If RED 4 moves towards the new path of BLUE 6, this is now a **Converging Paths** situation.

In *Figure B.15*, to establish a new legal position, RED 4 must either:

- (i) Cover the new path of BLUE 6, or ...
- (ii) Establish a new position in the path of BLUE 6 that allows BLUE 6 time and distance to avoid contact.

Figure B.15



## LEGAL DEFENCE - IS THERE A NEED TO STOP?

Does a player who has *covered-the-path* of an opponent who has the ball have to remain stationary in order to remain in a legal position?

The answer is usually **NO**, as long as, when he moves:

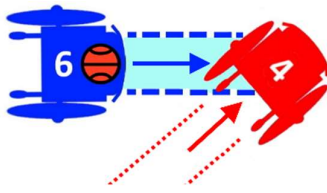
- (i) He maintains his legal position in the path of the opponent, and
- (ii) If he is moving towards his opponent, he does not cause a Head On collision.

## AFTER COVERING THE PATH, IS THERE A NEED TO STOP?

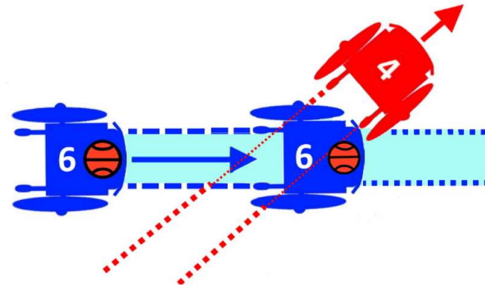
The answer may be no. It depends on whether the defender is moving towards the opponent who has the ball.

*Figure B.16*

BLUE 6 and RED 4 are moving on Converging Paths  
**BLUE 6 has the ball.**  
RED 4 has legally *covered the path* of BLUE 6.



*Figure B.17*



In *Figure B.17*, RED 4 continues to roll across the path of BLUE 6, and then starts to exit the path. BLUE 6 has been given time and distance needed to avoid contact. BLUE 6 runs into the rear wheel of RED 4.

### Decision:

If this illegal contact disadvantages RED 4, BLUE 6 is responsible for this contact.

Reference: *IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.3 - See the photo below.*

### Comments:

In *Figure B.16*, RED 4 has **continued** to legally occupy the area of floor that he is on as he leaves the path of BLUE 6 and into which BLUE 6 has tried to enter. (Reference: *IWBF Rulebook – Article 33.2*)

RED 4 established a legal right to occupy that floor area when it was a part of the area he occupied when he pushed across and covered the path of BLUE 6. BLUE 6 had been given the time and distance needed to avoid contact.

## Example 1: Legal defence position after covering the path.



This photo is the situation in *Figure B.17*

Both players are moving. They were on Converging Paths leading to this situation.

Let us assume that WHITE 7 established a legal position in front of RED 8 first by covering the path of RED 8 who was rolling into the key to do a layup.

If WHITE 7 has reached his position in this photo without causing contact to RED 8, WHITE 7 is entitled to continue on a straight line path out of the path of RED 8.

As WHITE 7 leaves the path, he still **retains his legal position** in that part of the path of RED 8 that he still occupies as he continues out of the path of RED 8.

Photo: Copyright Paralympic Games

(continued ...)

**Example 2: Legal defence position after covering the path.**

In this sequence of 4 photos, BLUE 8 has *covered the path* of moving opponent RED 5 who has the ball. BLUE 8 moves across the path and retains his legal position in that section of path that he is occupying as he exits the path. RED 5 is responsible for any chair contact that occurs.



Photos: Wheelchair Basketball South Africa.

These two diagrams illustrate the photos above.

Figure B.18

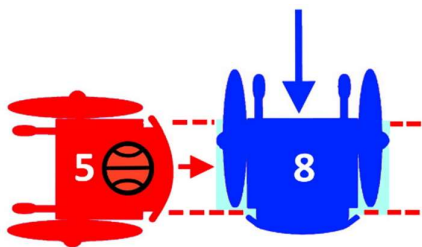
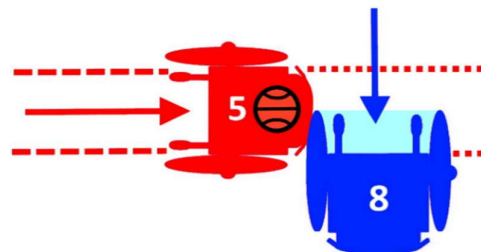


Figure B.19



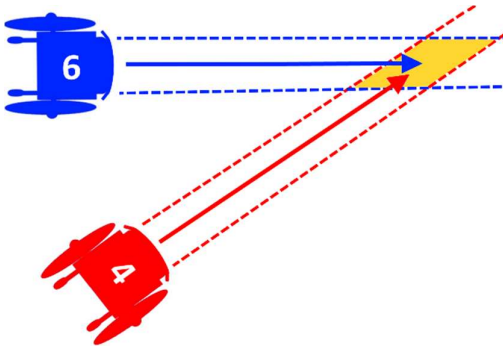
BLUE 8 legally covers the path of RED 5.  
 BLUE 8 continues across the path of RED 5.  
 If both players continue on straight line paths, RED 5 must avoid contact with BLUE 8.  
 RED 5 continues along his path and runs into BLUE 8 as BLUE 8 is leaving the path of RED 5.  
 RED 5 is responsible for any chair contact that occurs.

**CONVERGING PATHS:  
GUARDING AN OPPONENT WHO DOES NOT HAVE THE BALL (Off ball).**

**OFF BALL PLAY - The Official Must Decide *Who Got There First?***

1. When deciding the responsibility for off-ball contact between a player and **an opponent who does NOT have the ball**, the IWBF official must decide "**Who got there first?**", subject to the other factors in Point 3 below.
2. A player who reaches a position first before an opponent who does **NOT** have the ball is considered to have legally occupied that position. (Reference: IWBF Rulebook – Articles 33.5.1)
3. However, there may be other factors to consider, such as *Crossing-the-path*, *Head-on contact*, *Screening*, *Pivoting*, and *Wheelchair Tripping* – (see pages C.3 and C.4)

Figure B.20



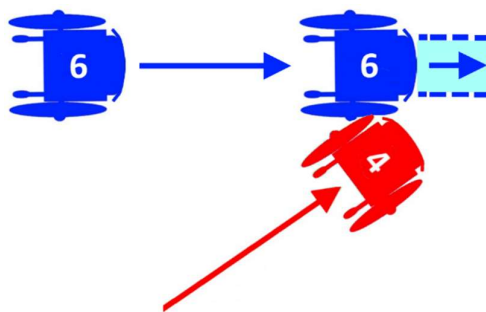
In Figure B.20 neither player has the ball.

BLUE 6 and RED 4 are pushing towards the same spot on the floor (the yellow area).

Whoever reaches the yellow area first has the legal position.

If a defender wishes to take a legal position to guard an opponent who does not control the ball, he has only to occupy that position first before his opponent.

Figure B.21



In Figure B.21, neither player has the ball.

BLUE 6 and red 4 are on OFF BALL Converging Paths. RED 4 runs into the side of BLUE 6. The officials must *decide Who Got There First?*

**Decision:**

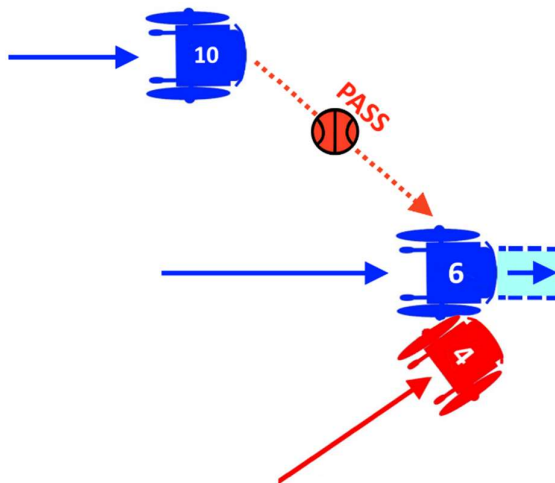
BLUE 6 has occupied a legal position where their paths intersect before RED 4.

RED 4 is responsible for this chair contact.

References: IWBF Rulebook - Articles 33.5.1

**WHO REACHED A LEGAL POSITION FIRST OFF BALL?**

Figure B.22



BLUE 6 and RED 4 are on converging paths.

BLUE 10 attempts to pass the ball to BLUE 6.

RED 4 crashes into the side of BLUE 6 just before BLUE 6 catches the pass.

Who is responsible for this contact?

**Decision:**

RED 4 failed to establish a legal position in front of BLUE 6. This a Pushing foul by RED 4.

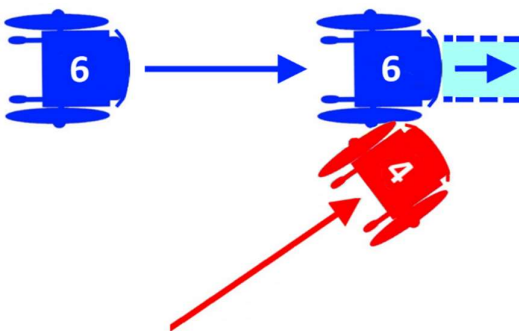
(Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.5)

## Responsibility For Contact Can Change Depending Upon Whether The Situation Is *Off The Ball* or *On The Ball*

There is a difference in the responsibility for contact that occurs between a defender and an opponent who **has** the ball (i.e. play **ON** the ball), and between a defender and an opponent who does **not** have the ball (i.e., play **OFF** the ball). Here are four examples that illustrate that.

### Example 1: Converging Paths - Guarding *OFF the Ball*

*Figure B.23* Neither player has the ball. Both players are moving.



BLUE 6 and RED 4 are heading on **CONVERGING PATHS** towards the spot where their paths will intersect.

Neither player has the ball and neither player changes direction. BLUE 6 reaches that spot first.

RED 4 runs into the side of BLUE 6.  
The contact occurs while both players are still moving.

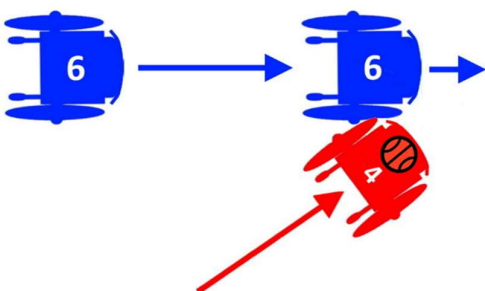
**Decision:** Pushing foul by RED 4 because BLACK 6 reached the position first.

*Reference: IWBFB Rulebook - Articles 33.5.1*

### Example 2: Converging Paths - Guarding the Ball (**ON BALL** Defence)

This is the same situation as in Example 1 *Figure B.23* (above), but this time RED 4 has the ball.

*Figure B.24*



RED 4 has the ball.

BLUE 6 and RED 4 are travelling on **CONVERGING PATHS**.

Neither player changes direction.

BLUE 6 pushes his horizontal bar into the path of RED 4 and contact occurs.

The point of contact is the same as in *Figure B.21*.  
The contact occurs while both players are still moving

**Decision:** Blocking foul by BLUE 6. BLUE 6 has **BLOCKED** the forward progress of RED 4.  
RED 4 has a legal position because BLUE 6 has failed to cover the path of RED 4 who has the ball.

*Rulebook Reference: 33.4.3:*

*"The defensive player must establish an initial legal guarding position by either:*

- (i) Covering the path of the opponent, or*
- (ii) Establishing a position in the path of the opponent that allows the opponent time and distance to avoid contact."*

In *Figures B.23* and *B.24* .....

- The paths are the same.
- The point of contact is the same.
- However, because, in *Figure B.24*, one of the players has the ball, the responsibility for contact has changed.

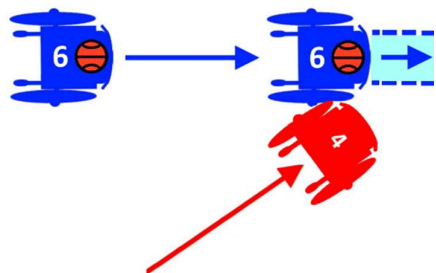
In this photo (*right*), both players are moving forwards.  
WHITE 15 has pushed into the path of GREEN 14 but she has not covered the path of GREEN 14. WHITE 15 is responsible for the same type of contact as BLUE 5 in *Figure B.24*.



*Photo: Wheelchair Basketball South Africa*

### Example 3: Converging Paths - Guarding the Ball (ON BALL Defence)

Figure B.25



This is the same situation as *Figure B.24* but this time BLUE 6 has the ball and RED 4 runs into the side of BLUE 6. RED 4 is attempting to enter a position already legally occupied by his opponent. RED 4 has failed to establish a legal position in the path of the ball carrier BLUE 6.

**Decision:** Pushing foul by RED 4.

*Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.4.3*

This photo (*right*) shows the situation in *Figure B.25*. As BLUE 9 moved close to WHITE 10, he had to decide whether he would be able *cover the path* of WHITE 10 or whether he should avoid possible contact. In this case, he has fouled by running into the side of WHITE 10's chair.

WHITE 10 must use his hands to control BOTH the ball and his wheelchair. He took his hands off his wheels, so he had to make a decision about whether BLUE 9 was likely to establish a legal position in his path. He had to decide whether he should continue on his path and gamble that he would beat BLUE 9 to the position that BLUE 9 was trying to reach, or whether he should avoid contact with BLUE 9 by either stopping or changing direction.



Photo: Matt Wells and IWBF

### Example 4 - Converging Paths - ON Ball and OFF Ball situations

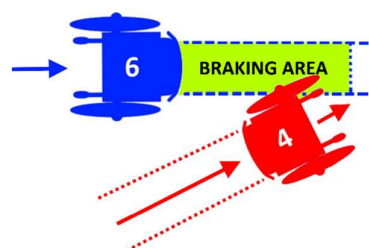


Photo: Matt Wells

This photo (*left*) shows an ON BALL **Converging Paths** situation. RED 5 is wheeling backwards. To reach a legal position, RED 5 must cover the path of WHITE 9. RED 5 is responsible for this contact.

*Figure B.26* shows the **same** situation **without** the ball. RED 4 has wheeled backwards into the path of BLUE 6. RED 4 has reached a legal OFF BALL position before BLUE 6. BLUE 6 must avoid chair contact with RED 4.

Figure B.26



## SUMMARY: GUARDING A MOVING OPPONENT

### 1. Guarding The Player Who Has The Ball

A defender who moves into the path of a moving opponent who has the ball must either:

- *Cover the path* of the opponent (i.e. the ball carrier or the opponent being screened),  
... Or...
- If he does **not cover the path**, he needs to have allowed the opponent TIME and DISTANCE to avoid contact by stopping **beyond the braking distance** of the opponent.

If he does either of these things, this defender is considered to have established a legal position, and the opponent will be responsible for any resulting contact.

### 1. Legal position v Opponent Who Does Not Have The Ball

To establish a legal position in the path of a moving opponent who does **not** have the ball, a player must occupy that floor position before the opponent does. In other words, the player must *GET THERE FIRST*. There is no time or distance requirement in this *OFF BALL* situation.

In IWBF basketball, the player taking this position can be facing in any direction.

### 3. Stationary Defender v Moving Opponent Who May or May Not Have The Ball

If a **stationary** player moves at the last moment **from within a chair length** into the braking area of a moving opponent **who may or may not have the ball**, he must allow that opponent time to avoid contact.

- See *Wheelchair Tripping - Pages C.3 and C.4*

## STOPPING: TIME AND DISTANCE - COMPARING IWBF AND FIBA

After the FIBA player catches the ball from his dribble, he can both hold the ball and stop at the same time. The wheelchair basketball player who is moving cannot do that. He has to use his hands to brake or stop. It is impossible for him to stop without putting his hands on his large wheels. He can either hold the ball to pass or shoot, or he can stop, but he cannot hold the ball in his hands and stop at the same time.



Photo: Kevin Bogetti-Smith

In this photo (*left*), RED 7 is rolling towards the basket.

He cannot stop because he has taken his hands off his wheels to shoot. He can choose to shoot or pass.

The distance travelled by the wheelchair player while he releases the ball and places his hands onto his wheels and stops his wheelchair is how *braking distance* is measured.

Extensive testing conducted in Australia by Ross Dewell showed that one chair length for a slow moving player, and two chair lengths for a fast moving player, is enough distance to stop or change direction in order to avoid a stationary opponent.

Braking on just one wheel will change the direction of the chair.

- FIBA allows a player **one or two steps** to stop, depending upon how fast the player is moving.
- IWBF allows a player one or two **chair lengths** to stop, depending upon how fast the player is moving.

If you compare the approximate top speed of a running able-bodied athlete to the approximate top speed of a wheelchair basketball player, the able-bodied athlete can cover distance at approximately twice the speed of a wheelchair basketball player in his game chair. But players in FIBA and players in IWBF are allowed about the same suggested distance to stop to avoid contact (one or two steps v one or two chair lengths).

So, because the wheelchair player's top speed is only half that of the FIBA player, a wheelchair player has twice as long to stop compared to his FIBA counterpart. However, the wheelchair player with the ball has more to do when coming to a stop compared to the FIBA player. It is impossible for the IWBF player to dribble and stop at the same time. The IWBF player has to first control the ball by placing it on his lap before using his hands to brake. The FIBA player stops using his legs, so he can dribble while coming to a stop.

So, although the IWBF player has more to do to stop than a FIBA player does, he will have about twice the time in which to do it. He also has more time to make the crucial decisions about whether he has the time and distance to avoid contact. He will be responsible for the decisions he makes.

### TIME TO STOP OR CHANGE DIRECTION

The TIME needed to stop or change direction can vary depending upon whether or not the player has possession of the ball.

In this photo (*right*), it will take more TIME for WHITE 15 to stop to avoid contact than it will take his opponent BLUE 10. Why?

WHITE 10 must catch the ball and put it on his lap BEFORE he can begin to move both of his hands to his wheels to brake. That takes time.

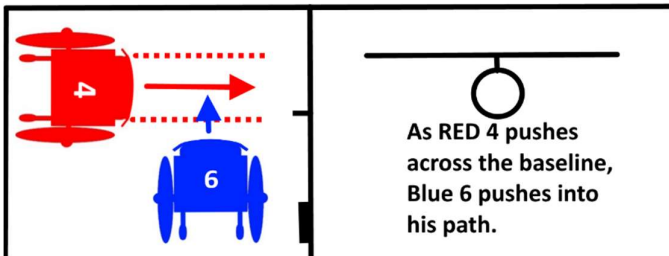
But BLUE 10 does not have a basketball to worry about. He can grab his wheels immediately with two hands.

Photo: Wheelchair Basketball South Africa.



## BRAKING DISTANCE: OFF-BALL

Figure B.27 Neither player has the ball.



In Figure B.27, neither player has the ball. RED 4 is on offence and is being guarded by BLUE 6. RED 4 is stationary in his front court near the baseline in the left corner. His chair is parallel to the baseline, close to the restricted area, and his chair is facing into the restricted area.

RED 4 and defender BLUE 6 are both stationary.

BLUE 6 is facing the baseline, less than a chair length from what will be the braking area of RED 4 if RED 4 starts to move forward. BLUE 6 is ready to stop any baseline move. RED 4 begins to move forward towards the key between the end line and BLUE 6.

BLUE 6 pushes into the braking area of RED 4, and gets part of his chair into the path of RED 4. RED 4 runs into the side of BLUE 6.

At the moment of contact, RED 4 has travelled about half of his chair length. Although there was initially less than a chair-length between the players, there was enough time for RED 4 to avoid contact. The Braking Distance for RED 4 was less than half a chair length because both players who were initially stationary had just started to move and RED 4 was not moving quickly.

### Question: Who is responsible for this contact?

**Answer:** RED 4 is responsible for this contact off the ball, because BLUE 6 reached the position first. In basketball terms, BLUE 6 'got there first'. RED 4 has attempted to enter a spot already occupied by an opponent. The Off ball principle is "Who got there first?" (Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.5.1) Remember, neither player had the ball. If this contact was slight, the officials may decide to make a **no call**.

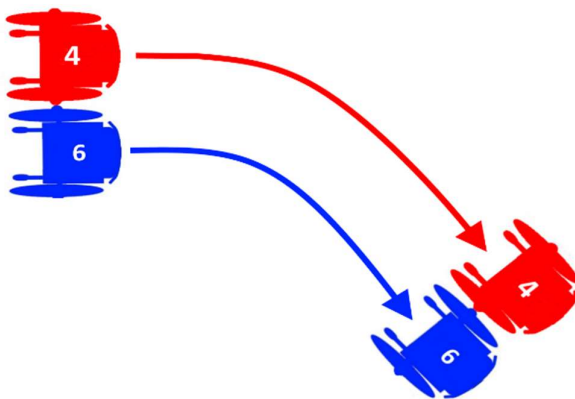
Around the restricted area in a zone defence, both teams manoeuvre for position and defenders close small gaps without a whistle being needed. Because there is little room to build up speed, the offence player will usually see the gap being closed by the defence and will have time to stop or to avoid contact. In those plays, braking distances will often be very short - less than a chair-length - because the play around the key is in a confined space where little speed is possible, so the bumps and collisions are not severe.

If two opponents are working hard against each other, fairly and within the rules, and if neither player is placed at a disadvantage, the chair-to-chair contact that occurs may often be regarded as incidental, with no call made. An equal battle of skill and ability between two players of equal points, especially OFF BALL, can often be a **No Call, Play On**. However, chair contact that creates a disadvantage or gains an unfair advantage should be called.

## CURVING PATHS

When two opponents are travelling parallel and close beside each other, they may contact each other and keep moving. It is not unusual for both chairs to drift into a curving path with both chairs seemingly locked together.

Figure B.28



The player on the **inside** of the path (BLUE 6) is often the one at a disadvantage.

He is usually forced into this curving path by being pushed by the player on the outside (RED 4).

The officials must decide whether the player on the **outside** of the curve (RED 4) has pushed illegally on his outside wheel causing his chair to push into that of his opponent resulting in the curving path. If this has occurred, then RED 4 has gained an advantage by illegally pushing his opponent off his path.



## Section C

# Guarding A Stationary Opponent



Photo: Basketball Australia

## GUARDING A STATIONARY OPPONENT

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 position his chair beside, in front of, or behind the player who has the ball without causing chair contact.

The defender must respect the following principles:

1. A stationary player is entitled to the space on the court occupied by his wheelchair.  
(Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.3)

2. An opponent may not place his wheelchair between the rear wheels of an opponent's chair.  
(Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.3)

The defender in each of these 3 photos has a legal guarding position against a stationary opponent who has the ball.

In *Photo 1 (right)*, WHITE 6 is closely guarding RED who has the ball and is stationary. WHITE 6 does not have to be facing her opponent. She can position her chair as close as possible to the RED chair without causing contact.

As long as WHITE 6 does not pull her chair backwards and cause contact with the RED chair behind her, and as long as she keeps her arm within her own cylinder, WHITE 6 has a legal position.

In *Photo 2 (below left)*, both players are stationary. The defender is sitting behind the back of GREEN 15's chair and outside his visual field. If the defender remains stationary and is not holding the chair of GREEN 15, he has a legal position.



Photos above and below: Kevin Bogetti-Smith  
Photo left: Wheelchair Basketball South Africa



In *Photo 3 (right)*, BLACK 14 can take a position as close as possible, short of contact, in front of, or beside, or behind his stationary opponent WHITE 12 who has the ball.

BLACK 14 must avoid chair contact while moving into this position. It does not matter which way BLACK 14 is facing. In IWBF basketball, a player does not have to be facing the opponent to have a legal position. Even if WHITE 12 did not have the ball, the position of BLACK 14 is legal.



## WHAT IF THE STATIONARY OPPONENT BEGINS TO MOVE TO A NEW POSITION?



In this photo, WHITE 12 is stationary. GREEN 15 has a legal guarding position even though he is not facing WHITE 12.

If WHITE 12 does not pass the ball, and he moves to a new position, defender GREEN 15 can move to re-establish a new legal position or he can move to maintain his legal position.

The principles of **Guarding a moving player who has the ball** will apply. Let's look at two situations:

### 1. If WHITE 12 has the ball and dribbles to a new position:

GREEN 15 must either *cover-the-path* or allow WHITE 12 *time/distance* to avoid contact.

GREEN 15 can move to maintain his legal position. (Reference: *IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.3*)

### 2. If WHITE 12 passes the ball and then moves to a new position:

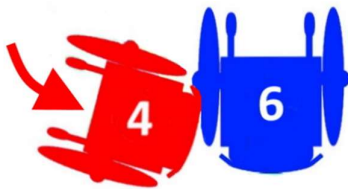
GREEN 15 must get to the new position first before WHITE 12, subject to the various requirements of *Article 33.5*

Photo: Wheelchair Basketball Canada and Kevin Bogetti-Smith Photography.

## COMMON TYPES OF WHEELCHAIR SPECIFIC FOULS AGAINST STATIONARY OPPONENTS

### Example 1. Holding By Pushing Against The Side Of An Opponent's Chair

Figure C.1 Holding Foul



#### Both players are stationary

RED 4's chair is pushing into the side of BLUE 6's chair.

RED 4 is pushing on his outside wheel to maintain contact with BLUE 6's chair in order to prevent BLUE 6 from moving. BLUE 6 is held on the spot by the illegal contact.

**Decision:** HOLDING foul by RED 4.

(Reference: *IWBF Rulebook Definition - Article 33.13 - Holding*)



In this photo (*left*), both players are stationary.

GREEN 6 has the ball.

The BLUE defender is preventing GREEN 6 from moving by forcing his chair into the side of the chair of GREEN 6.

BLUE is illegally Holding GREEN 6 to that spot on the floor.

This is a HOLDING Foul by the BLUE defender.

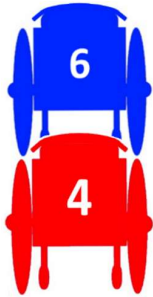
Photo: Wheelchair Basketball South Africa

## 2. Holding By Pushing Between The Rear Wheels of the Opponent's Chair

It is illegal for a player to push into the space occupied by an opponent's wheelchair. For example, a player cannot push his horizontal bar into or underneath an opponent's chair or in behind the front or rear castors in order to prevent that opponent from moving.

A player cannot push his chair between the rear wheels of an opponent in order to Hold or Push his opponent's chair. A foul should be called against the player who has caused the contact.

*Figure C.2: Holding by pushing between the rear wheels*



BLUE 6 is **stationary**.

RED 4 is pushing between the rear wheels of BLUE 6 and holds BLUE 6's chair so that BLUE 6 cannot move away. BLUE 6 is held on the spot by this illegal contact by RED 4.

**Decision:** HOLDING Foul by RED 4.



This photo shows the situation in *Figure C.2*. All of the players are stationary.

The WHITE defender has forced his chair into the back of the chair of the stationary GREEN player who has the ball. This makes it very difficult for the GREEN player to manoeuvre his chair.

This is a HOLDING foul by the WHITE player.

This type of foul is less common in the modern game because many chairs have rear castor wheels that make it more difficult to push under an opponent's chair from behind. However, this type of contact still occurs.

*Photo: Matthew Wells for IWBF.*

## HELD BALL - Incidental Chair Contact

If a number of opponents are holding the ball, any chair contact between their chairs while they struggle for possession can usually be regarded as **incidental contact**, not as a foul.



*Photos: Wheelchair Basketball South Africa*

## Section D

# Converging Paths

1. Definition: Converging Paths
2. Guarding the player who controls the ball
3. When neither player has the ball

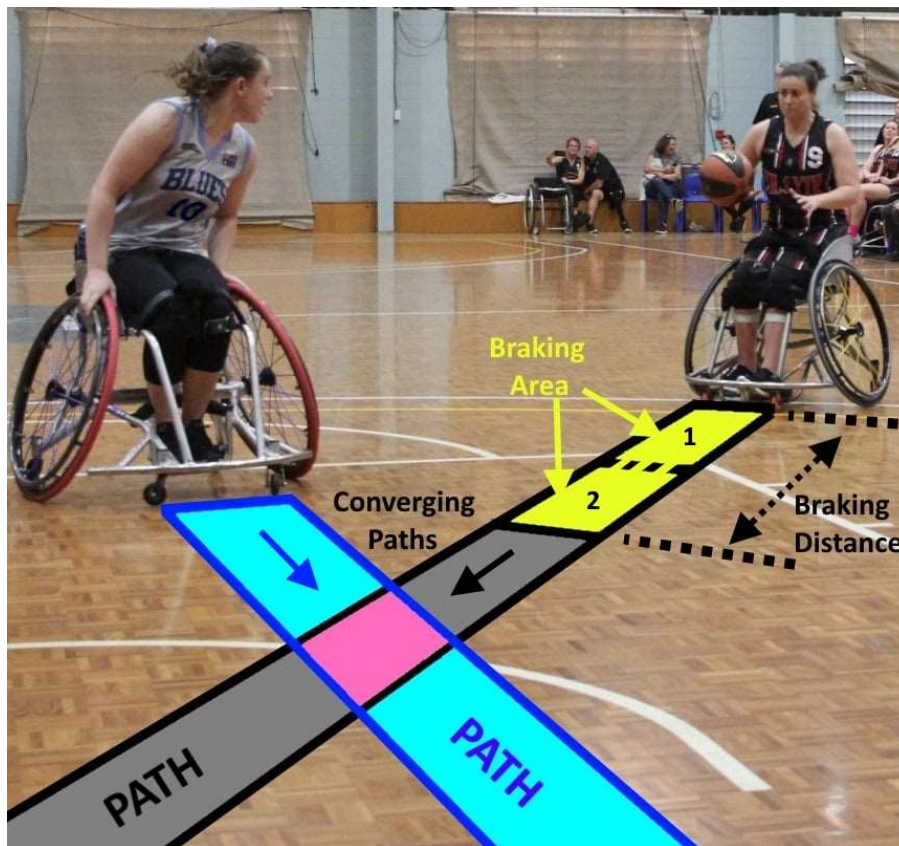


Photo: WNWBL and Basketball Australia  
Added graphics by Ross Dewell.

## CONVERGING PATHS

There are TWO basic situations to consider involving **converging paths**:

- (1) Situation No.1: When one of the two opponents **has the ball** (i.e. Guarding The Ball Carrier).
- (2) Situation No.2: When **neither** opponent has the ball.

### 1. CONVERGING PATHS: GUARDING THE PLAYER WHO HAS THE BALL

In this photo, defender BLACK 5 is on a **converging path** with GOLD 10 who has the ball.



Photo: Wheelchair Basketball South Africa Added graphics: Ross Dewell.

To reach a legal guarding position **in the path** of GOLD 10 before contact occurs, the defender BLACK 5 must either:

(a) Cover the *path* of GOLD 10 who has the ball, or ...

(b) Stop in the path of GOLD 10 **BEYOND** the braking distance of GOLD 10, allowing GOLD 10 time and distance to avoid contact. When stopping in a legal position **BEYOND** the braking distance, BLACK 5 does not have to cover the path of GOLD 10

Both players in this photo have decisions to make.

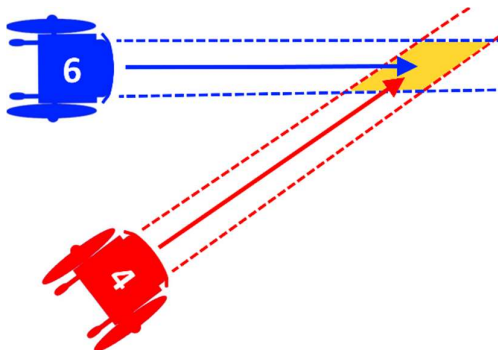
The defender BLACK 5 must decide whether he will be able to **cover the path** of GOLD 10, or whether he must stop or change direction to avoid chair contact.

GOLD 10 must decide whether he can keep going and beat BLACK 5 to the position where their paths intersect, or whether he must stop or change direction to avoid contact if BLACK 5 covers his path.

### 2. CONVERGING PATHS: GUARDING THE PLAYER WHO DOES NOT HAVE THE BALL

Figure D.1 Converging Paths OFF BALL

**Who got there first?**



BLUE 6 and RED 4 are on **Converging Paths**. Neither player has the ball.

If both players maintain straight line paths, whoever first reaches a position in the opponent's path has a legal right to that position.

The referee will decide: **Who got there first?**

In this **OFF-BALL** situation, the player who gets into his opponent's path first does **NOT** have to cover the path of his opponent. That is different to the **ON BALL** rule where a defender is guarding an opponent who has the ball.

## Wheelchair Tripping

Article 33.5.3 makes it illegal for a **stationary defender**, when guarding a moving player with or without the ball, to push suddenly into the opponent's braking area, from a stationary starting position **within a chair length** of the opponent's braking area, and without allowing that opponent reasonable time and distance to avoid contact.

I call this illegal action "*wheelchair tripping*". This contact is the wheelchair equivalent of *tripping* in FIBA basketball. The contact that results from a player wheelchair tripping an opponent who is travelling at speed can be dangerous. Wheelchairs travelling at speed can be tipped over by this illegal contact. IWBF introduced Article 33.5.3 specifically to outlaw the potentially dangerous contact that can result from this action.

### Example: Wheelchair tripping the player who has the ball

Figure D.2

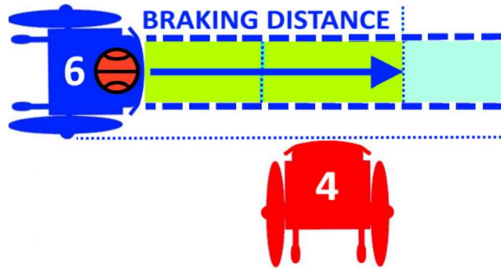
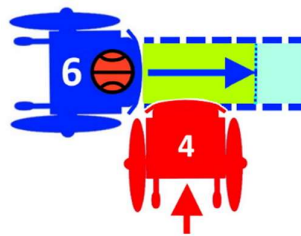


Figure D.3



(Figure D.2) BLUE 6 pushes forwards with the ball towards RED 4 who is stationary less than a chair-length from the path of BLUE 6.

(Figure D.3) When BLUE 6 is almost level with him, RED 4 suddenly pushes the front of his chair into the braking area of BLUE 6 and does not allow BLUE 6 time or distance to stop. BLUE 6 runs into RED 4.

If BLUE 6 is travelling very quickly, the chair collision that results from this illegal contact can be dangerous.

**Decision:** RED 4 has committed a BLOCKING foul.  
(Reference: IWBF Rulebook – Articles 33.4.1; 33.4.2; 33.4.3)

### Examples of Wheelchair Tripping

Here are photos of two situations that could be "*wheelchair tripping*" situations if each of the two defenders was stationary before pushing, **from less than a chair-length away**, into the path of the moving player who has the ball. Each defender has illegally BLOCKED the forward progress of the player who has the ball.

If all four of these players were moving in straight lines, GREEN 9 (Photo1) and BLACK 7 (Photo 2) have both failed to *cover the path* of the player who has the ball.

This type of contact is a BLOCKING foul. Depending on the severity of contact, a stronger penalty may apply.



Photo: (left)  
Wheelchair  
Basketball  
South Africa.



Photo: (right)  
Wheelchair  
Basketball  
Canada and  
Kevin Bogetti-  
Smith  
Photography.

## Example: Wheelchair tripping the player who does not have the ball

Figure D.4 Neither player has the ball.

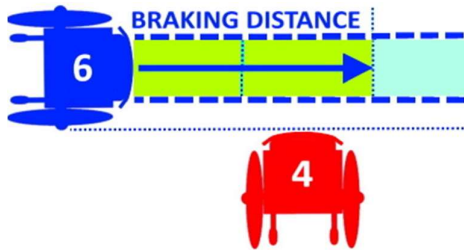
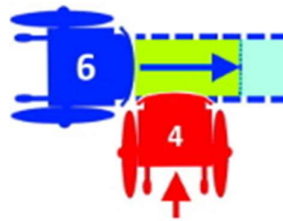


Figure D.5



Defender RED 4 (Figure D.4) is stationary, less than a chair-length from the path of BLUE 6.

BLUE 6, who does not have the ball, is about to push quickly past RED 4. When BLUE 6 is too close to RED 4 to stop or change direction, RED 4 suddenly pushes his horizontal bar into the braking area of BLUE 6 who has no time or distance to avoid contact.

BLUE 6 (Figure D.5) runs into the horizontal bar of RED 4. This is a Blocking Foul by RED 4.

Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.5.3

The speed of BLUE 6 when this contact occurs is important. The slower BLUE 6 is going, the less braking distance he needs. However, if BLUE 6 is travelling at high speed, this contact can be dangerous.

This same contact is illegal when made by a Screener (Article 33.8) or by a defender who is **Guarding The Player Who Controls The Ball** (Article 33.4). In each of those situations, the Screener or the Defender must give the opponent time and distance to stop or change direction to avoid contact.

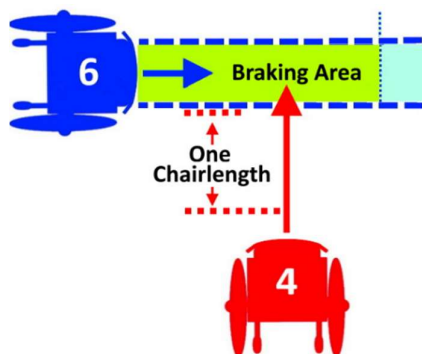
### Comments:

(1) Contact of this type is common around the restricted area, especially in a zone defence where players have little room to manoeuvre. Cutters may see small gaps in the zone that are quickly closed by the defenders. The resulting contact can often be regarded as incidental if the players are not moving quickly.

(2) This "wheelchair tripping" situation is different from an OFF BALL Converging Paths situation where both players have been moving for longer distances - longer than braking distance - before one enters the path of the other.

How far away from an opponent does a defender have to be before he can start to move legally into the path from a stationary position?

Figure D.6



To move into the Braking Area of BLUE 6 from a stationary position, without creating a wheelchair tripping situation, with or without the ball, RED 4 must start from further than a chair-length away, as shown in Figure D.6.

Both players can see the developing situation off ball. Each of these players off the ball has only his chair to handle. Each one has full use of both of his hands to steer, push or brake.

Each player must decide if he can beat the opponent to that position on the floor. Remember that the slower that BLUE 6 is going, the shorter his braking distance will be, and the closer to him that RED 4 can be sitting before moving into the path.

Because it is off ball, and Converging Paths, each player has only to *Get There First*. The official will judge whether RED 4 was more than a chair length from the braking area of BLUE 6 when RED 4 began his move into that braking area.

If RED 4 started his move from beyond a chair-length from the path of BLUE 6, and he enters the path of BLUE 6 without causing contact, he has a legal position. If he runs into the wheel or horizontal bar of BLUE 6 while trying to enter the path, he will be responsible for illegal contact. This is consistent with the **off-ball** rules in IWBF's **Rule 6: Fouls**.



## Section E

# Crossing The Path



*Photo: Matthew Wells for IWBF. Added graphic by Ross Dewell*

## Definition: Crossing The Path

Figure E.1 shows BLUE 6 legally crossing the path of Red 4. BLUE 6 and RED 4 are travelling close together, closer than braking distance.

When BLUE 6 has his near-side axle further forward than the front of RED 4's chair, he **changes direction** and turns across into the path of RED 4.

This move is called **Crossing The Path**.

The two players may be travelling either on Converging Paths or on *approximately* parallel paths and in the same direction.

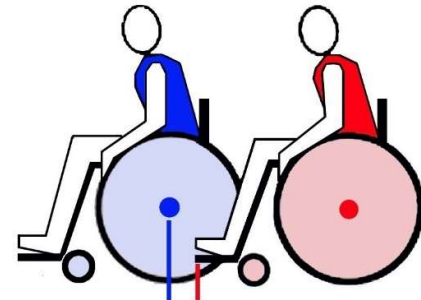
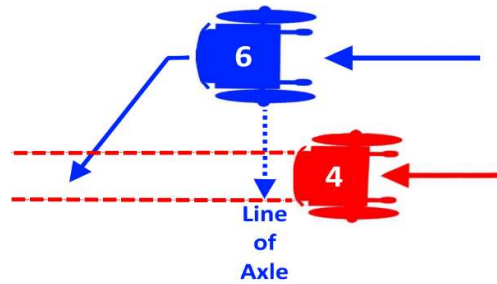
## When can you begin to cross the path?

A player can turn into the path of his opponent after he has his **near-side** rear axle **beyond** (further up court than) the front of his opponent's chair.

Reference: *IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.6*

The player who has legally *crossed the path* is considered to have given his opponent the time and distance needed to avoid contact. The opponent will be responsible for any chair contact that occurs.

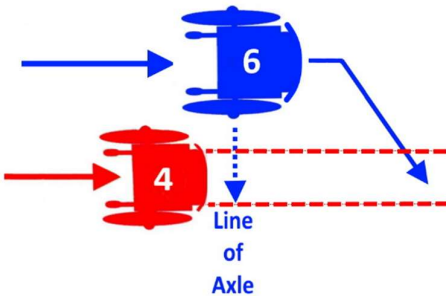
Figure E.1



Blue has his near side axle further forward than the front of Red's chair

## LEGAL CROSSING THE PATH

Figure E.2 Legal Crossing the Path



BLUE 6 can begin to cross the path of RED 4.

If BLUE 6 crosses the path legally and chair contact occurs, RED 4 will be responsible for the contact.

## Example: Legal Crossing the Path by the Player who has the ball.

In the two photos below, BLUE 11 gets his near-side axle beyond the front of WHITE 4. BLUE 11 then turns legally across the path of WHITE 4. WHITE 4 will be responsible for chair contact unless other factors are involved.



Photos: Matthew Wells for IWBF. Added graphic by Ross Dewell

### Legal Crossing the Path by the Player who has the ball.

If the player with the ball gets his near-side axle further forward than the front of his defender's chair, and then he changes direction to cross the path of the opponent, he has legally established a new path. The opponent must avoid chair contact.

Figure E.3.

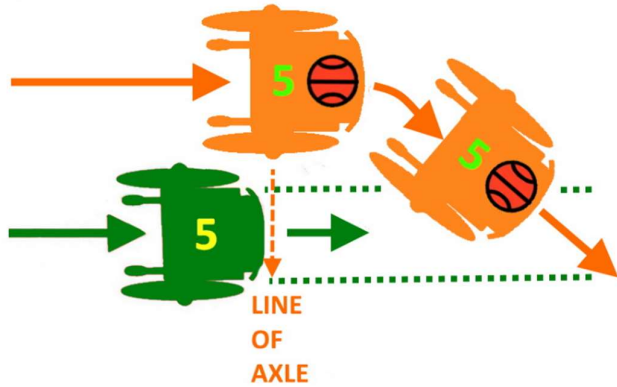


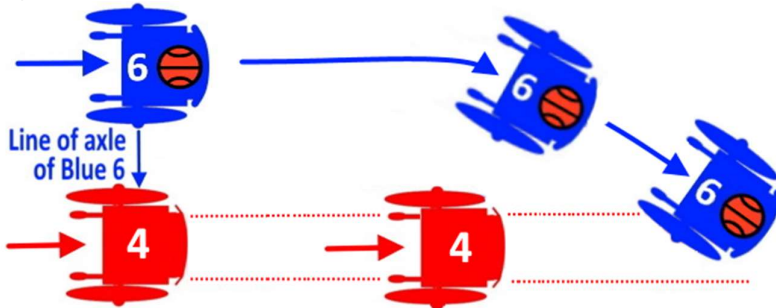
Photo: Wheelchair Basketball South Africa

In Figure E.3, GOLD 5 has legally crossed the path of GREEN 5. GOLD 5 has moved forward far enough to have her near-side axle inside the path of GREEN 5. GOLD 5 has established a new straight line path, so GREEN 5 must avoid chair contact. GREEN 5 has time to brake to avoid contact, or to change direction by braking on her right wheel.

### Legal Crossing the Path by the Player who has the ball.

In Figure E.4, BLUE 6 is moving faster than RED 4. Without causing chair contact, BLUE 6 begins to cross into the path of RED 4 before getting his near-side axle further forward than the front of RED 4's chair.

Figure E.4



BLUE 6 gets his near-side axle into the path of RED 4, and continues on a straight line path.

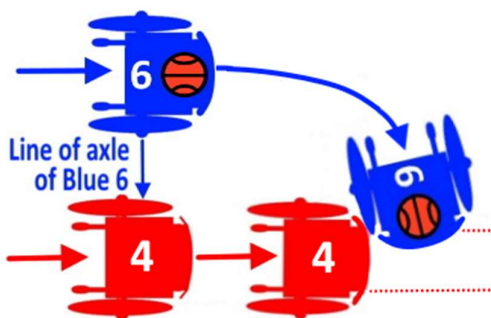
BLUE 6 has established a new straight line path.

BLUE 6 and RED 4 are now on Converging Paths.

RED 4 must avoid chair contact.

### Illegal Crossing the Path by the Player who has the ball.

Figure E.5



BLUE 6 has the ball.

BLUE 6 attempts to cross into the path of RED 4 before getting the near-side axle beyond the front of the chair of RED 4.

RED 4 runs into BLUE 6.

BLUE 6 is responsible for this chair contact.

Reference: IWBf Rulebook Article 33.6.

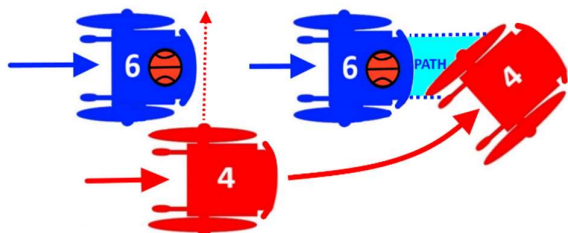
## LEGAL AND ILLEGAL ON BALL DEFENCE: CROSSING THE PATH:

Article 33.6 says:

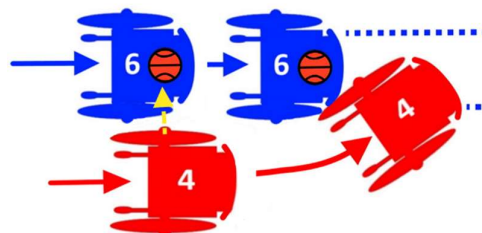
*The player who crosses the path must allow the opponent time and distance to avoid contact.*

In *Figure E.6*, RED 4 is guarding BLUE 6 who has the ball. RED 4 has his near-side axle beyond the front of the chair of BLUE 6. RED 4 can legally begin to turn across the path of BLUE 6.

*Figure E.6*      **LEGAL**



*Figure E.7*      **ILLEGAL**



In *Figure E.6*, RED 4 has crossed and covered the path of Blue 6. Blue 6 will be responsible for chair contact. In *Figure E.7*, RED 4 has turned to enter the path of BLUE 6 before getting his near-side axle beyond the front of BLUE 6. When chair contact occurs, RED 4 has failed to allow Blue 6 time or distance to avoid contact. RED 4 is illegally Blocking the forward progress of BLUE 6.

**Comment: Time and Distance:** The **TIME** factor is relevant in *Figure F.7*. A player who does **not** have the ball can change direction quickly by braking on one wheel. A player who **has** the ball usually takes longer to brake or change direction to avoid contact when he has to release his two-handed hold of the ball before he can reach for his wheel to brake. In *Figure F.7*, RED 4 has not allowed BLUE 6 **time** to avoid contact.

## OFF BALL: ILLEGAL CROSSING THE PATH

This sequence of 3 photos (*left*) shows **ILLEGAL** crossing the path. Neither player has the ball. BLUE 5 and WHITE 12 are moving on parallel paths. BLUE 5 attempts to cross into the path of WHITE 12.



Before making his turn, BLUE 5 fails to get his near-side axle further forward than the front of the chair of WHITE 12. BLUE 5 has changed direction from a parallel path and turned into the side of WHITE 12's chair from under a chair-length away. *Photos: Matthew Wells for IWBF*

BLUE 5 runs into the side of WHITE 12. BLUE 5 is pushing into space that is legally occupied by WHITE 12. BLUE 5 has illegally contacted WHITE 12. When he changed direction, BLUE 5 was not far enough away from WHITE 12 for this situation to have changed this situation to a **Converging Paths** situation. (See Page E.5, *Figure E.9*)

The next 2 photos (*below*) show an illegal attempt to cross the path by White 5.



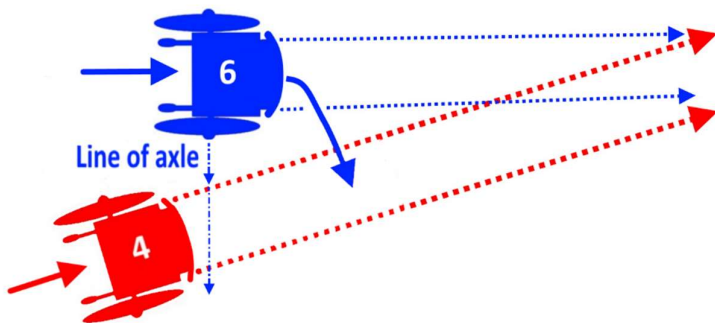
When WHITE 5 makes his turn towards BLACK 25, he is less than a chair-length from BLACK 25. He does not have his near-side axle further forward than the front of BLACK 25's chair.

Chair contact occurs in front of WHITE 5's axle. He has failed to get his axle in front of BLACK 25. WHITE 5 is responsible for this contact.

*Photos: Copyright Paralympic Games 2022.  
Added graphics: Ross Dewell*

### Example: Changing Direction From Less Than A Chair Length away

Figure E8 Neither player has the ball.



BLUE 6 and RED 4 are on **converging paths**.

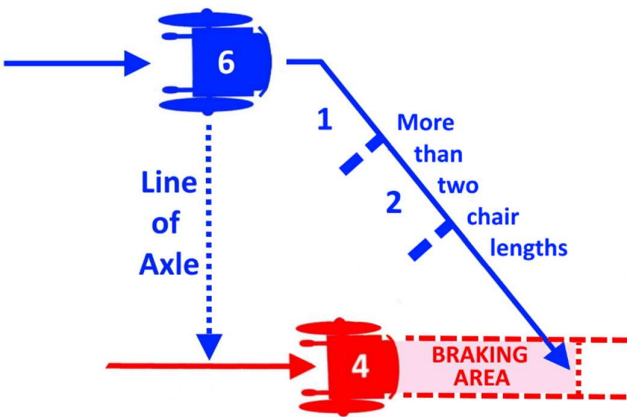
**BLUE 6 is less than a chair-length from RED 4.** When the two chairs are almost level, BLUE 6 **changes direction** and **crosses the path** of RED 4.

The change of direction by BLUE 6 has changed this situation from the OFF BALL principle of *Who Got There First* to the principle of **Crossing The Path**.

To cross the path legally, BLUE 6 has his near-side axle beyond the front of RED 4 before changing direction. (Reference: IWBFB Rulebook - Article 33.6.)

### TURNING ONTO A NEW PATH: THE PLAYER WHO DOES NOT HAVE THE BALL

Figure E.9: Neither player has the ball



In Figure E.9, **neither** player has the ball.

Opponents BLUE 6 and RED 4 are moving approximately parallel to one another. They are more than braking distance away from each other.

BLUE 6 changes direction and establishes a new straight-line path that converges with the path of RED 4.

BLUE 6 changes direction **before** getting an axle beyond the front of RED 4. BLUE 6 has to push for more than his braking distance to enter the path of RED 4 and so he has established a new straight-line path before entering the path of RED 4.

Because BLUE 6 changed direction more than braking distance away from the path of RED 4, RED 4 has been given equal time and opportunity to avoid contact. This is no longer a *Crossing The Path* situation.

BLUE 6's new path means that the paths of BLUE 6 and RED 4 will intersect on *Converging Paths*.

**Who is responsible for any chair contact that occurs when BLUE 6 and RED 4 each attempt to enter the same position on the floor?**

**Decision:**

The player who first enters the path of his opponent will have right of way.

This is a *Converging Paths* situation where neither player has the ball and so each player only has to *Get There First* to establish a legal position. Reference: IWBFB Rulebook - Articles 33.5

**Rationale:**

BLUE 6 has changed direction far enough away from RED 4 to make this a *Converging Paths* situation. Both players must now obey the rules for *Converging Paths* Off the ball – *Who Got There First?*

**Comments:**

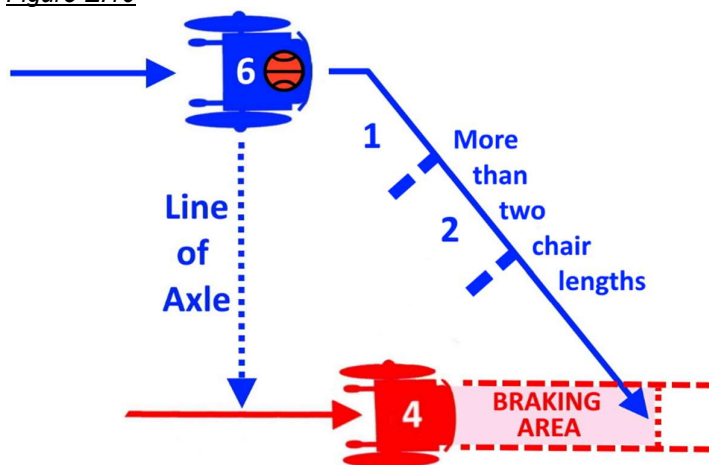
- Compare this situation to the *Crossing The Path* situation in Figure E.3 where two players are moving very close together **before** one changes direction.
- The distance between the chairs when one player changes direction is the important difference between the situation shown in Figure E.7 and the situations described in Figure E.8 and Figure E.9.

## TURNING ONTO A NEW PATH: THE PLAYER WHO HAS THE BALL

If the player who changes direction has to push **more than his braking distance** to enter the path of his opponent, this situation becomes Converging Paths, not Crossing the Path.

If the ball carrier changes direction across the path of an opponent who was on a parallel path, but he makes the turn at a distance that allows the defender time to avoid contact, this becomes a Converging Paths situation, rather than a Crossing The Path situation. The ball carrier has made a legal turn.

Figure E.10



In Figure E.10, BLUE 6 has the ball.

BLUE 6 and defender RED 4 are moving approximately parallel to one another and they are more than chair-lengths apart when BLUE 6 changes direction before getting an axle beyond the front of RED 4.

BLUE 6 establishes a new straight-line path heading towards the path of RED 4.

The distance to the path of RED 4 is **greater than the braking distance** of BLUE 6. He allows RED 4 time to avoid contact.

**BLUE 6 has changed direction far enough from RED 4 to make this a Converging Paths situation.**

RED 4 must establish a legal position by either *covering the path* of the ball carrier BLUE 6 or by allowing BLUE 6 time to avoid contact. Reference: IWBFB Rulebook - Article 33.6.2 and 3

**NOTE:** A defender is moving beside an opponent who has the ball. If that defender legally gets his near-side axle beyond the front of the chair of his opponent who has the ball and then legally begins to turn across the path of that opponent, he must then **COVER THE PATH** of that opponent to establish a legal position.

Legally beginning to turn across the path does not mean the defender has a legal position if contact occurs before the path is covered. In this situation, **covering the path** is the criteria that determines whether a legal defence position has been established.

### What is the difference between Crossing The Path and Converging Paths?

A Converging Paths situation involves straight-line paths, with **no change of direction** by either player. Crossing the Path involves a change of direction.

In Figure E.11, BLUE 6 and RED 4 are OFF BALL on Converging Paths.

In Figure E.12, BLUE 6 has changed direction and is legally Crossing the Path of RED 4.

Figure E.11 CONVERGING PATHS

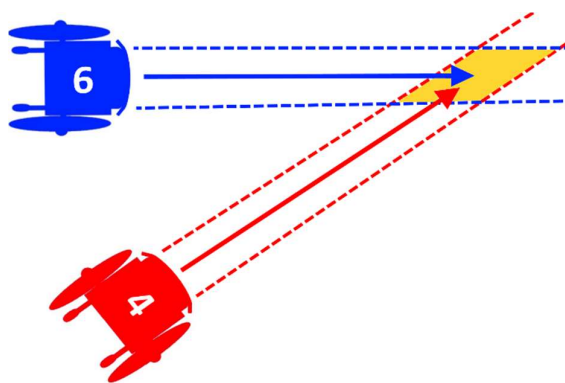
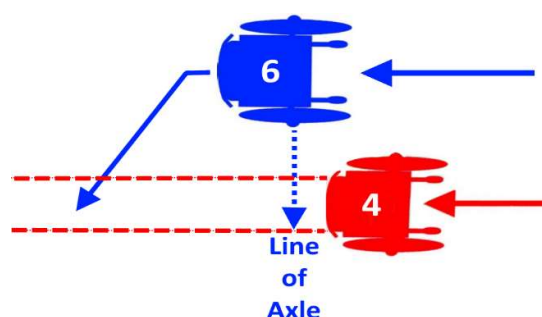


Figure E.12 CROSSING THE PATH



## SECTION F

# CLOSING THE GAP



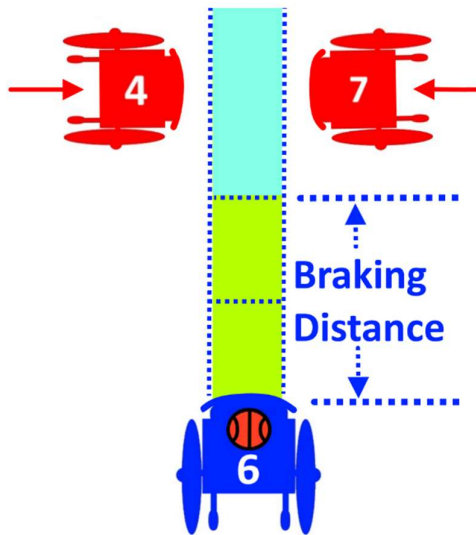
*Photo: Courtesy of Sports and Spokes  
© Paralyzed Veterans of America, Sports 'n Spokes.  
Photo by Mark Cowan.*

## CLOSING THE GAP

- *Closing the gap* describes a situation where **two defenders** move towards each other to close up a space between them that an opponent is attempting to wheel through.
- This is a very common contact situation, both ON and OFF the ball.
- This situation often occurs when the defence team is playing a zone defence.

### Example 1: Legal Closing The Gap

*Figure F.1*



BLUE 6 has the ball.

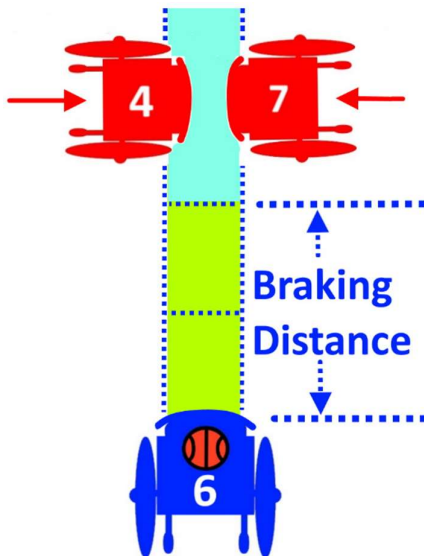
BLUE 6 has time to avoid contact

The distance from BLUE 6 to RED 4 and RED 7 is **more** than two chair-lengths i.e. more than the distance that BLUE 6 needs to stop or change direction to avoid contact.

BLUE 6 pushes towards the gap between RED 4 and RED 7.

*(Continued in Figure F.2)*

*Figure F.2*



RED 4 and RED 7 **both** push towards each other to close the gap.

If RED 4 and RED 7 can occupy some of the path of BLUE 6 **outside the braking area** of BLUE 6, then BLUE 6 must avoid contact

RED 4 and RED 7 have successfully moved into the path of BLUE 6 while allowing BLUE 6 time and distance to avoid contact.

BLUE 6 must avoid the legal positions of RED 4 and RED 7.

#### Comments:

1. Because the defenders have legally occupied a position **beyond** the braking distance of BLUE 6, the defenders do not have to cover the path of BLUE 6.

BLUE 6 has been given time to stop or change direction to avoid contact. If RED 4 and RED 7 maintain their legal positions, then BLUE 6 will be responsible for contact.

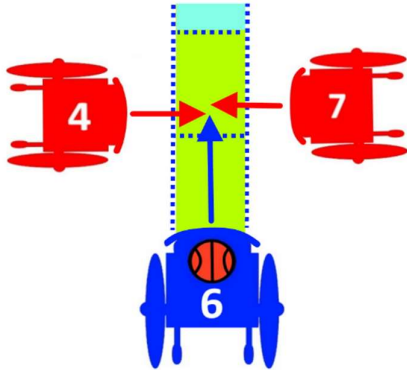
2. Even if RED 4 and RED 7 close the gap further when BLUE 4 moves within braking distance, RED 4 and RED 7 **remain in a legal** position because there was never enough room for BLUE 4 to get through the gap between RED 4 and RED 7.



## Example 2 - Illegal Closing The Gap

BLUE 6 has the ball and is *not* given time to avoid contact by either RED 4 or RED 7.

Figure F.3



Defence players RED 4 and RED 7 are **inside the braking distance** of BLUE 6.

The yellow shaded area is the braking area of BLUE 6.

BLUE 6 has the ball. The distance to RED 4 and RED 7 is **less than** the distance that BLUE 6 needs to avoid contact.

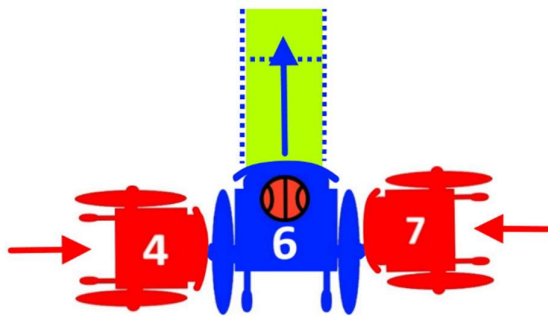
BLUE 6 pushes towards the gap between RED 4 and RED 5.

RED 4 and RED 7 both either pivot or push towards each other to close the gap.

If contact occurs **after** BLUE 6 has legally entered the gap, RED 4 and RED 7 are responsible for contact

(Continued in Figure F.4.)

Figure F.4



BLUE 6 has entered the gap first.

**Decision:** This contact is a defensive foul, even if BLUE 6 did not have the ball.

The officials should call the foul on whichever defender first came into contact with BLUE 6.

**The officials should look for the point of contact.**

Both defenders have contacted the sides of BLUE 6's chair. This indicates that neither defender reached a legal position.

To obtain a legal position, ONE of the two defenders must get into the path of BLUE 6 and cover the entire path of BLUE 6.

## HOLDING BOTH SIDES OF THE OPPONENT'S CHAIR



This photo shows two defenders making contact similar to that shown in *Figure F.4*.

WHITE 10 has the ball and has wheeled **legally** through the gap between the chairs of BLUE 8 and BLUE 9.

BLUE 8 and BLUE 9 are both contacting the sides of the chair of WHITE 10, in an attempt to close the gap and prevent the WHITE team player progressing up the floor.

**Decision:** A foul should be called against whichever BLUE player first contacted the WHITE player.

Photo: Matt Wells and IWBF

### Example 3: Illegal Closing The Gap

This photo shows another example of the situation in *Figure F.4*

All players are moving. RED 6 has wheeled into the gap between the two defence chairs of defenders WHITE 12 and WHITE 14.

Both WHITE 12 and WHITE 14 have contacted the side of RED 6's wheelchair.

The official should call a Pushing foul on the defender who first made contact with RED 6. To establish a legal position in front of RED 6, one of the BLUE players must cover the *entire path* of the player who has the ball.

*Photo: Copyright British Wheelchair Basketball.*

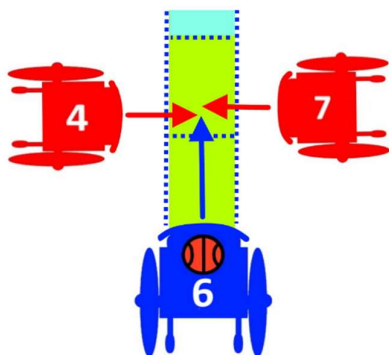


### Example 4: Closing the gap - Blocking Foul

**TO COVER THE PATH LEGALLY OF THE PLAYER WHO HAS THE BALL, ONE DEFENDER MUST COVER THE ENTIRE PATH.**

If **two** defenders move into the path of an opponent who has the ball, *inside the braking distance* of that player, they cannot legally *cover the path* by having some of the path covering by each of them. ONE defender *inside the braking distance* of BLUE 6 must cover the **entire** path.

*Figure F.5*



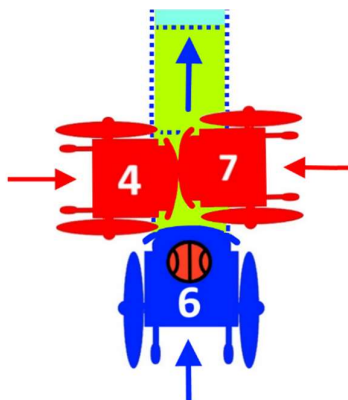
In *Figures F.5* and *F.6*, BLUE 6 has the ball.

RED 4 and RED 7 are sitting on either side of BLUE 6. As BLUE 6 moves towards them, RED 4 and RED 7 enter the Braking Area of BLUE 6. Neither one *covers the path* of BLUE 6. BLUE 6 does not have time to avoid contact.

RED 4 and RED 7 cannot legally cover **half of the path** each if they enter the path **within the braking distance** of BLUE 6 who has the ball because **BLUE 6** has not been given time and distance to avoid contact.

In *Figure. F.6*, BLUE 6 collides with RED 4 and RED 7.

*Figure F6*



#### **Decision:**

The officials should call the Blocking foul on the defender that first came into contact with BLUE 6.

If there is only one defender, he cannot legally cover just part of the path. A second defender who also fails to *cover the path* does not make two failures legal.

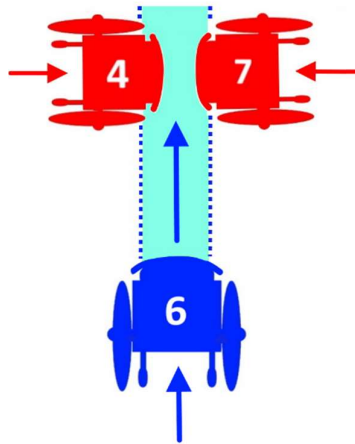
The only way one defender (or both) can cover only **part** of the path of BLUE 6 and be legal is if a legal position is established **beyond the braking distance**, which then gives the opponent the distance needed to avoid contact. (*See Example 5.*)

**Comments:** (1) *This type of contact is very common around the key during a zone defence. If the contact is minimal and disadvantage is minimal, the officials may choose to make a NO Call.*

(2) *Where two OFFENCE players attempt to close the gap on a defender, and contact occurs, the officials should make a decision based upon the rules for Screening.*

## Example 5: Legal Closing The Gap - OFF BALL

Figure F.7



BLUE 6 does not have the ball.

RED 4 and RED 7 are wheeling towards each other.  
They stop inside the path of BLUE 6 who is moving towards them.

BLUE 6 and these RED players are on Converging Paths.

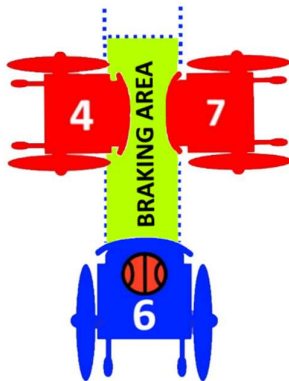
The contact principle in this OFF BALL situation is *Who got there first?*

If BLUE 6 continues on his path and contacts either RED 4 or RED 7, then BLUE 6 will be responsible for this chair contact.

## Two Common Situations where there is NO ROOM to get through the gap.

### Situation 1: Closing the gap - No room between the chairs ON BALL

Figure F.8



In Figure 8, RED 4, RED 7 and BLUE 6 are all stationary.

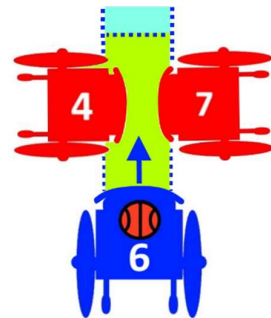
Because BLUE 6 is stationary, RED 4 and RED 7 have legal positions.

RED 4 and RED 7 are in the path of BLUE 6 and inside the braking area of BLUE 6 but they are not covering the path of BLUE 6.

In Figure 9, BLUE 6 begins to push towards RED 4 and RED 7.

RED 4 and RED 7 do not move.

Figure F.9



If BLUE 6 contacts RED 4 or RED 7, BLUE 6 will be responsible for contact because RED 4 and RED 7 had stationary legal positions **before** BLUE 6 started to move.

If RED 4 and RED 7 move towards each other to narrow the gap after BLUE moves towards them, they are entitled to their floor positions within the path of BLUE 6. With or without the ball, BLUE 6 would be responsible for contact because there was never enough room for BLUE 6 to fit into or move through the space between RED 4 and RED 7.

## Judgement of *Closing The Gap* – The thought process for officials

### EITHER .....

1. No ball involved
2. Was there is enough space to get through the gap?
3. Watch to see *who got there first*.

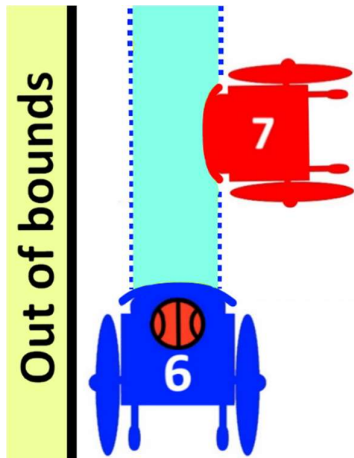
### ... OR ...

1. Player has the ball
2. Is there is enough space there?
3. Did *one of the defenders cover the path or allow time and distance to avoid contact?*

Closing the gap (continued ...)

## Situation 2: Closing the gap - No room on the sideline or the baseline.

Figure F.10: Legal closing of the gap



BLUE 6 and RED 7 are both **stationary**.

There is only a small gap between RED 7 and the out-of-bounds line.

RED 7 has positioned his chair legally so that there is only a small space between his chair and the out-of-bounds line.

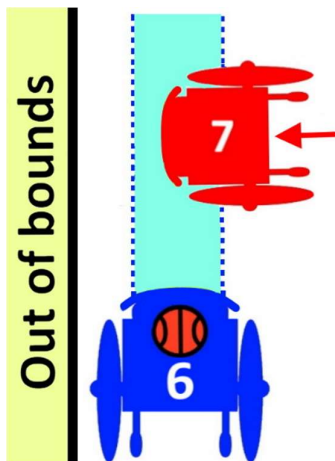
The space is smaller than the width of a wheelchair.

There is not enough room for BLUE 6 to wheel through legally without contact.

BLUE 6 starts to move forwards and he attempts to wheel through the space between RED 7 and the sideline. The space is not wide enough for BLUE 6 to fit through.

(Continued in Figure F.11 below)

Figure F.11



As BLUE 6 wheels towards this small space, RED 7 moves towards the sideline to further reduce the size of the space.

In this situation, before RED 7 moved, there was never enough room for BLUE 6 to wheel through the small space between RED 7 and the sideline.

The slight adjustment to RED 7's position has not changed the lack of room that BLUE 6 needed to move between RED 7 and the out-of-bounds line.

BLUE 6 runs into RED 7. BLUE 6 is responsible for any chair contact.

Even though RED 7 has not *covered the path* of BLUE 6, BLUE 6 is responsible for contact because RED 7 occupied an area of the path of BLUE 6 before BLUE 6 started to move.

### NOTES

:

1. Responsibility for contact will be the same, regardless of whether or not BLUE 6 had the ball.
2. If BLUE 6 did **not** have the ball, BLUE 6 is still responsible for contact because RED 7 reached a legal position first. It would be an OFF BALL situation.

### Comment:

*This type of contact occurs frequently both on the ball and off the ball, especially around the baseline when players try to get through small gaps between chairs between a defender and the out-of-bounds line.*

*Braking distances are usually very short in the manoeuvring around the key. Contact in these situations may be relatively soft. The official's call (ON or OFF the ball) may be a **NO CALL – Play on**, unless other factors are involved.*

**Note** that it is a violation for a player to wheel out of bounds to get around an opponent.

## Section G

# Setting Screens

**Screens - Stationary Opponents**  
**Screens - Moving Opponents**



*Photo: Basketball Australia and WNWBL*

## SCREENING

### FIELD OF VISION – FIBA but not IWBF

Whether screens are set inside or outside the opponent's visual field is **NOT** relevant in IWBF basketball.

All of the screen positions of RED 4 in *Figure G.1* are LEGAL

The **IWBF** screening rules are concerned **only** with Screens set on either *moving* players or *stationary* players, and not whether the screen is set within or outside the opponent's field of vision.

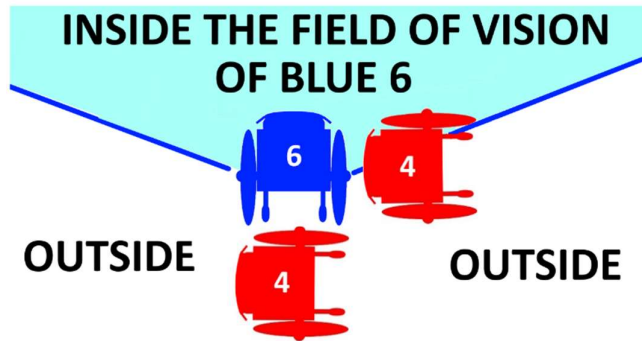
To set a legal screen, the screener must *either*:

*Cover the path* of the opponent being screened  
..... Or .....

Allow the opponent time and distance to avoid contact.

If the screener has to reposition his screen because the opponent has avoided the screen, **the screener must allow the opponent time and distance to avoid contact** when taking the new screening position.

*Figure G.1* Field of Vision



### 1. SCREENING A STATIONARY OPPONENT

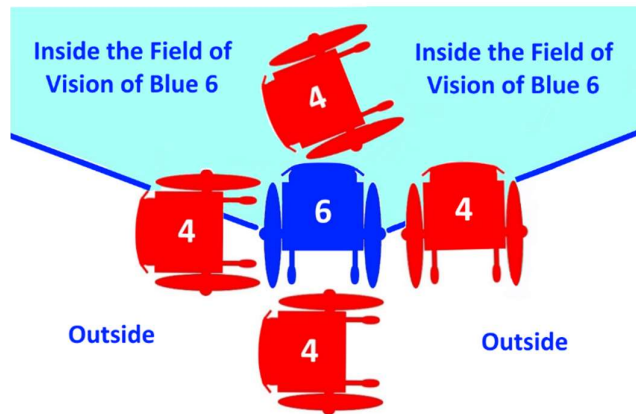
In **IWBF** basketball whether a screen is set **either inside or outside** a **stationary** opponent's visual field, the screen can be set **as close as possible** short of contact.

*Figure G.2: Legal Screens v Stationary opponent.*

In *Figure G.2*, defender BLUE 6 is **stationary**.

The screens set by RED 4 are all **stationary**.

All of the screen positions of RED 4 are **legal**. Whether BLUE 6 can see the screen is not relevant.



In this photo, WHITE 14 has set his screen within the visual field of the two BLUE opponents.

One opponent is beside him. The other is immediately in front of him. In this play, as long as WHITE 14 maintains his stationary position and does not wheel forward into the opponents, his screen is legal.

If the opponents move and then WHITE 14 moves to reset his screen, the screening rules apply once again.

*Photo: Courtesy of Wheelchair Basketball South Africa*

Screening a Stationary Opponent (continued ..)



**Example:**

GREEN 15 has wheeled towards the side of the key to set a screen to prevent WHITE 10 and WHITE 5 from guarding the player who has the ball.

This type of screen in the area round the key is very common in wheelchair basketball when the screener tries to block two opponents.

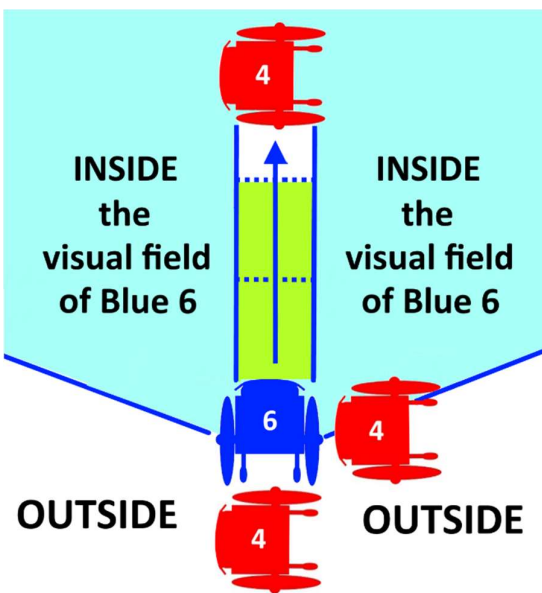
GREEN 15 must not cause contact. She must stop before contact occurs when she wheels in to set the screen. She cannot drive in and crash into the two WHITE players.

Photo: Matt Wells for IWBF

GREEN 15 has set a legal screen and is holding her chair still. WHITE 10 and WHITE 5 must find a way around the screen without causing contact.

## 2. SCREENING A MOVING OPPONENT

Figure G.3 Defender BLUE 6 is moving.



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

**All of the Screen positions of RED 4 in Figure G.3 are LEGAL.**

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

1. 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*.

2. 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. (Reference: IWBF Rulebook – Article 33.8)



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** (i.e., 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 the screener Player B may be responsible for any chair contact that results unless other factors are involved.

In this photo, BLUE 14 has set a legal stationary screen on his moving WHITE team opponent.

Photo: Matthew Wells for IWBF.

### Example: LEGAL SCREEN ON A MOVING OPPONENT



Photo: Basketball Australia and WNWBL

In this photo, BLACK 9 has set a legal ON BALL screen on WHITE 6.

BLACK 9 has *covered the path* of WHITE 6, therefore she has allowed WHITE 6 the time and distance needed to avoid contact by stopping or by changing direction.

If WHITE 6 changes direction in order to avoid contact with the screen, BLACK 9 can move to a new position to set a new screen on WHITE 6, as long as she allows WHITE 6 the time and distance needed to avoid contact with the new screen.

### Example: ILLEGAL SCREEN ON A MOVING OPPONENT

Let's examine a *head on* contact situation where the head on collision involves an illegal screen.

Figure G.4 Illegal Screen ... continued in G.5 ->

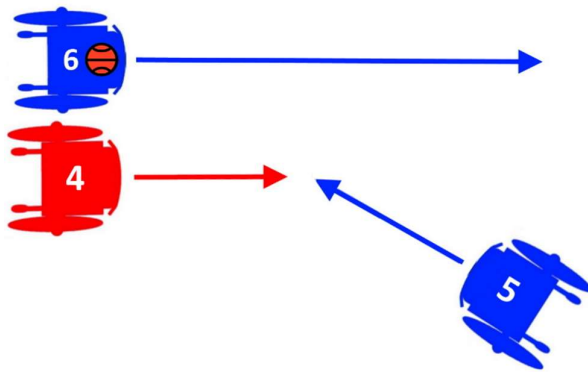
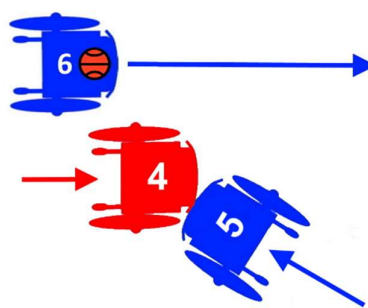


Figure G.5 Illegal Screen



BLUE 6 has the ball. Defender RED 4 is guarding BLUE 6. BLUE 6 and RED 4 are moving quickly.

BLUE 5 attempts to prevent RED 4 from guarding BLUE 6 by setting an ON BALL screen on RED 4.

BLUE 5 rolls at RED 4 head on and **without stopping** collides with RED 4. The point of contact is on the front of each chair.

**Decision:** Illegal screen by BLUE 5.

To set a legal screen moving head on towards RED 4, BLUE 5 must be stationary once he enters the path of RED 4 and allow RED 4 the time and distance needed to avoid contact.

Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.8

**Comment:**

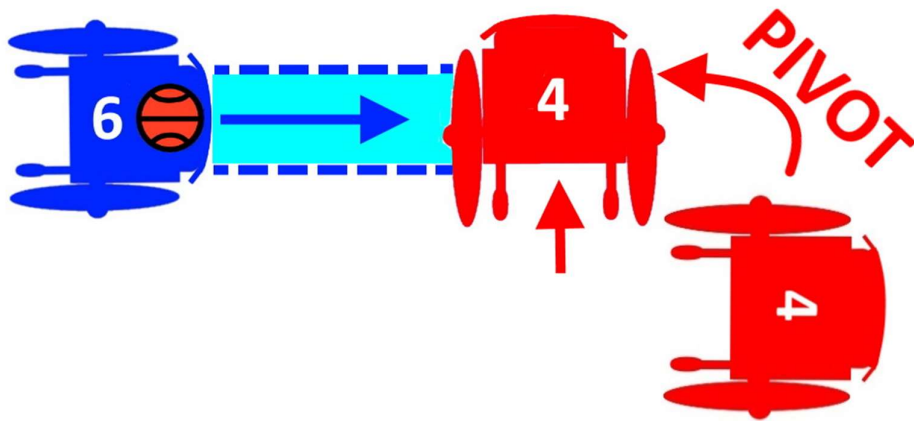
In this situation, the official must make a judgement call about the action of the offensive player BLUE 5. Was BLUE 5 setting an ON BALL screen? In this case, YES.

Recognition of the play situation in front of you is an important skill for the wheelchair basketball official.



## Section H

# Pivoting

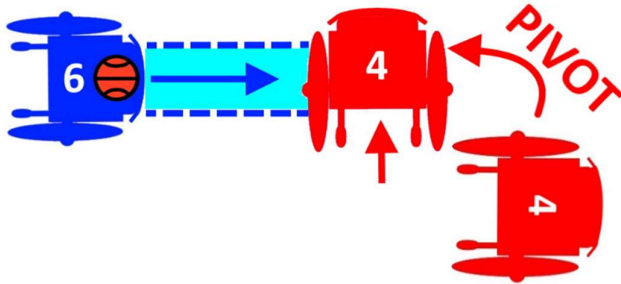


# PIVOTTING

## 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 *cover the path* before contact occurs **unless** his opponent has been given sufficient time and distance to avoid contact - (see *Figure H.1*).

*Figure H.1* Pivoting into the path of a player who has the ball..



RED 4 is **stationary** outside the path of BLUE 6 who has the ball.

RED 4 pivots into the path of BLUE 6 and covers the path of BLUE 6.

After pivoting, RED 4 stops. RED 4 is at 90 degrees to the direction of the path of BLUE 6.

Because BLUE 6's path is covered, he has been given equal time to avoid contact.

The BLUE shaded area = braking area of BLUE 6.

BLUE 6 maintains his path and runs into RED 4.

**Decision:** BLUE 6 is responsible for contact (CHARGING foul).  
 RED 4 has covered the path of BLUE 6 before contact occurs.  
 Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.3

**Comments:**

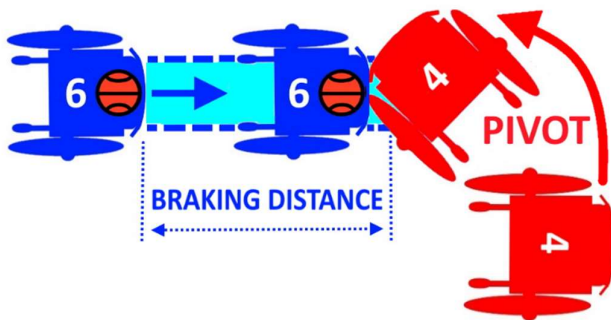
RED 4 must complete the pivot movement and stop **before** contact occurs.

If RED 4, after covering the path of BLUE 6, continues to pivot **towards** BLUE 6 and chair contact occurs, then RED 4 will be responsible for the chair contact. This situation is illustrated in *Figure H.2*.

If the defender can pivot on the spot and maintain his original legal floor position, he retains that legal position. This type of pivot is difficult to do in a wheelchair but it is possible.

## 2. PIVOTTING TOWARDS THE OPPONENT

*Figure H.2* Pivoting past square towards the opponent.



BLUE 6 has the ball.

RED 4 is **stationary** outside the path of BLUE 6.  
 RED 4 pivots into the path of BLUE 6 and **covers the path of BLUE 6**.

RED 4 then continues to **pivot** in the direction of BLUE 6 who has maintained his straight line path.

RED 4 is still pivoting *towards* BLUE 6 when BLUE 6 crashes into RED 4.

The BLUE shaded area = braking area of BLUE 6.

**Decision:**

RED 4 is responsible for this chair contact.  
 After covering the path of BLUE 6, RED 4 is not entitled to continue to move towards BLUE 6.  
 (Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Articles 33.4; 33.3)

**Comment:** This can be a difficult judgement call for the official.

At the end of the pivot, very slight movement towards the opponent which has not significantly changed a situation where the ball carrier had a clear responsibility to avoid contact may be considered incidental

(continued ..)

*Pivoting: (continued ...)*

*Comment about Figure H.2*

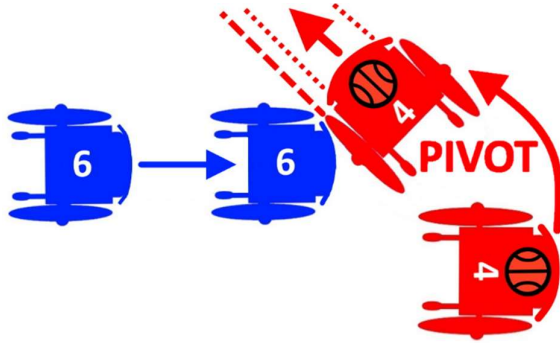
Note these decisions:

If we change who has the ball in *Figure H.2*, then there would be different responsibility for contact.

- For example:
1. *Figure H.3* RED 4 has the ball.
  2. *Figure H.4* Neither player has the ball.

Let's look at each situation.

### 1. RED 4 from *Figure H.2* HAS THE BALL



*Figure H.3*

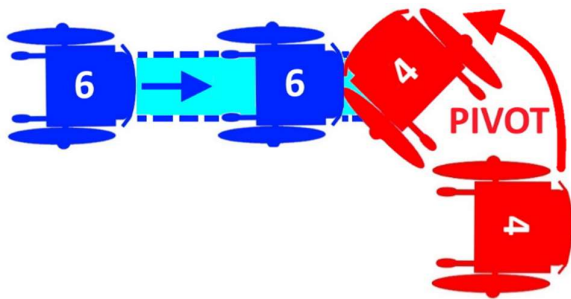
BLUE 6 is moving towards RED 4 who has the ball.

RED 4 pivots and begins to dribble forwards.

BLUE 6 will be responsible for chair contact.  
(Reference: *IWBF Rulebook – Article 33.3*)

### 2. IF NEITHER PLAYER HAS THE BALL

*Figure H.4: Neither player has the ball.*



RED 4 pivots towards BLUE 6 and into the path of BLUE 6.

**The decision on responsibility for contact in this play rests upon the official's ability to recognise what is happening here.** He must be able to recognise the intent of the players involved, and the consequences of the contact.

If the RED team has the ball, this could be a screening situation, or it might be a simple off ball play.  
(Reference: *IWBF Rulebook – Articles 33.3; 33.4*)

In *Figure H.4*, the official has a judgement call to make. There are a number of possible decisions. These are:

- (a) If **neither** player has the ball, then *either* player may be responsible for this contact. This will depend upon two things:
  - (i) While pivoting, did RED 4 maintain his position by pivoting on the spot, or ....
  - (ii) While pivoting, did RED 4 significantly shift 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 be quite severe, but a 'no call' may still be the result.
- (c) It may be an illegal screen by RED 4 if the RED team, but not RED 4, had the ball, and the pivot by RED 4 was illegal. (Reference: *IWBF Rulebook – Article 33.8*)
- (d) It may be a pushing foul by BLUE 6 if RED 4 established a legal position by stopping before contact occurred. (Reference: *IWBF Rulebook – Article 33.4.6*)

**Comment:** *Although there are a number of possible decisions in this situation, there are IWBF contact rules to cover all the possibilities. The official must decide which rule is appropriate in each case.*

# SUMMARY - Contact Situations

## 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. (Reference: *IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.4*)

#### 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*. (Reference: *IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.3*)

#### 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. (Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Article 33.5)*

#### 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**.

(References: *IWBF Rulebook - Articles 33.5*)

- **A defender who has covered the path of the player who has the ball has established a legal position, and he is considered to have given that player 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.**  
(Reference: *IWBF Rulebook – Article 33.4.2*)  
This principle is the same in FIBA rules. (Reference: *FIBA Rulebook – Article 33.4.2*)
- **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.**  
(Reference: *IWBF Rulebook – Article 33.4.2*)

**Comment:** *Chair control is usually maintained by using one or both hands on the big wheels of his chair. A ball carrier who takes both of his hands off the wheels and holds the ball, ready to shoot or pass, has chosen to ignore his responsibility to maintain control of his chair. He cannot stop if he takes his hands off his wheels. He will be responsible for any contact he causes if his chair contacts the chair of any opponent who has a legal position. It is a risk that he takes when he takes his hands off his wheels.*

## Section J

# Head-On Contact

1. With the ball
2. Without the ball

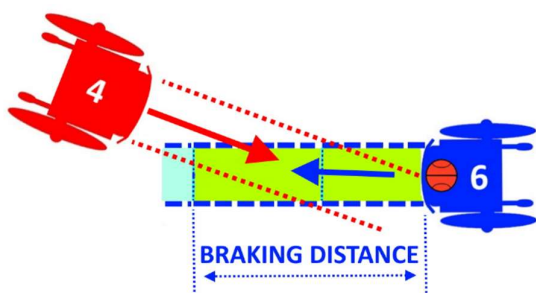


Photo: Matt Wells and IWBF

## HEAD-ON CONTACT

### 1. WITH THE BALL

*Figure J.1 BLUE 6 has the ball.*



A moving defender is not allowed to collide head on with the player who has the ball.

In *Figure J.1*, BLUE 6 and RED 4 are both moving head on towards each other on a collision course.

RED 4 pushes into the braking area of BLUE 6.

Even if RED 4 covers the path of BLUE 6, he cannot continue to move forward and run head on into BLUE 6.

To establish a legal position in this head-on situation, RED 4 must **either** ...

- (a) Stop in time to allow BLUE 6 time to avoid contact,  
... **or** ...
- (b) Cover the path of BLUE 6 before contact occurs and **RED 4 must be stationary** at the moment of contact.

If RED 4 continues on his path and collides head on with BLUE 6, then RED 4 has committed a **Pushing** foul, even if the path of BLUE 6 has been covered.

(References: IWBFB Rulebook - Articles 33.4

Responsibility for head-on contact varies according to whether or not one of the players involved in the contact has possession of the ball.

When a defender is moving *head-on* at an opponent who has the ball, the defender will be responsible for any chair contact that occurs. The defender must stop before contact occurs.

The defender must establish a legal position by either:

- (i) *Covering the path* of the ball carrier, and then he must stop, because he is moving directly at the defender head on, or .....
- (ii) Establishing a legal position by stopping in the path of the player who has the ball and allowing that player time and distance to avoid contact.



Photo: Basketball Australia

The distance needed to stop or change direction is approximately one or two chair-lengths, depending upon the speed of the wheelchair. It is never more than two chair-lengths.

In this photo, RED 11 would have a legal position if she was stationary before chair contact occurred. She has covered the path of WHITE 15. However, if, after covering the path, RED 11 was still moving and she ran head on into the front of the chair of WHITE 15, RED 11 would be responsible for that chair contact.

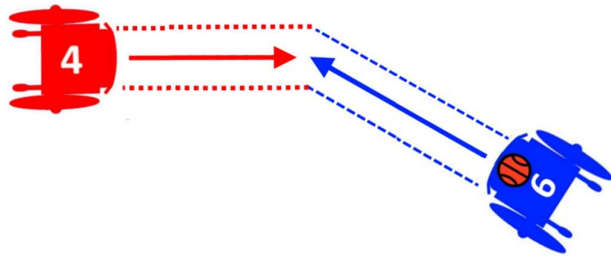
Because WHITE 15 has the ball, the defender RED 11 must avoid moving forwards and causing head-on contact with WHITE 15.

To establish a legal position, RED 11 must:

- Establish a legal position that allows WHITE 15 time and distance to stop or to change direction to avoid chair contact; and
- Be stationary when head-on contact chair occurs.  
She cannot be moving head-on towards WHITE 15 when chair contact occurs – see *Figure J.2*

## 1. HEAD ON CONTACT: On ball

*Figure J.2 BLUE 6 has the ball*



Defender RED 4 is pushing head-on towards the path of BLUE 6 **who has the ball**. Neither player changes direction.

RED 4 keeps moving forwards and runs head on into BLUE 6.

**Decision:** RED 4 is responsible for this contact.

(IWBF Rulebook reference: Article 33.4)

## 2. HEAD ON CONTACT: Off Ball - Chasing a loose ball

In *Figure F.3*, RED 4 and BLUE 6 are on the same Converging Paths shown in *Figure J.2*. This time, neither player has the ball. They are pushing fast from opposite directions to reach a loose ball.

If they collide head on, there are two possible calls: *Figure J.3*

(1) The official may judge this chair contact to be Incidental contact (No Call) despite the possible severity of the collision if:

- Both players had an equal opportunity to secure the ball, and ..
- Neither player had secured the ball when contact occurred, and ..
- Neither player has done anything else that is illegal.

(2) If one player gains sole possession of the ball first, the opponent must avoid contact. That is similar to the situation in this photo (*right*). Both players have a chance of gaining possession. They are on Converging Paths.

If one gains possession before his opponent, the opponent must avoid contact. If both gain possession at approximately the same time, and they struggle to take the ball from the opponent, then any chair contact that results while both are still holding the ball will be incidental contact and a foul should not be called.

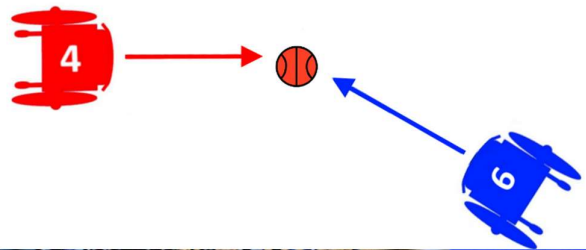


Photo: IWBF

## Head On Collision: Chair contact when both players secure possession of the ball



This photo (*left*) shows a possible **No foul** situation. Both players are facing each other to gain possession of a loose ball. Both secure possession **at the same time**. Both had an equal chance to reach the ball first.

1. If they both wheel head on towards each other to reach a loose ball (*Figure J.3*), and they crash head-on before either catches the ball, this may be a *No Foul* situation.
2. If they both gain possession and struggle to pull the ball away from each other, and this action causes the chairs to collide, that contact is incidental. A foul should not be called.
3. If one of the players secures possession first, before the other touches the ball, the opponent must avoid contact.

Photo: Matthew Wells for IWBF.

# The 3 Basic Principles of Contact

## FIRST BASIC PRINCIPLE OF CONTACT

### Guarding A Player Who Has The Ball

The following principles determine whether a defender **Player A** has established a legal position in the path of an opponent **Player B** who has the ball:

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

- (a) **Player A** must cover the path of **Player B** before chair contact occurs,  
.... Or ...
- (b) **Player A** must give **Player B** time and distance to avoid chair contact.

If the defender **Player A** has done *either* (a) or (b), then **Player A** has established a 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 and without invading the space occupied by **Player B**.

## SECOND BASIC PRINCIPLE OF CONTACT

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

The following principles determine whether a defender **Player A** has established a legal position in the path of an opponent **Player B** who **does not have the ball**:

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

**Player A** must establish a legal position first by reaching the position before opponent **Player B**

#### 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

#### 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.



## Section J

# The Act of Shooting

**When is a player in the Act of Shooting?**

**When does the Act of Shooting end?**



Photo: Basketball Australia

## THE ACT OF SHOOTING

Understanding the definition of the act of shooting - when it starts and when it ends - is important to an understanding of what penalty to apply for a foul.

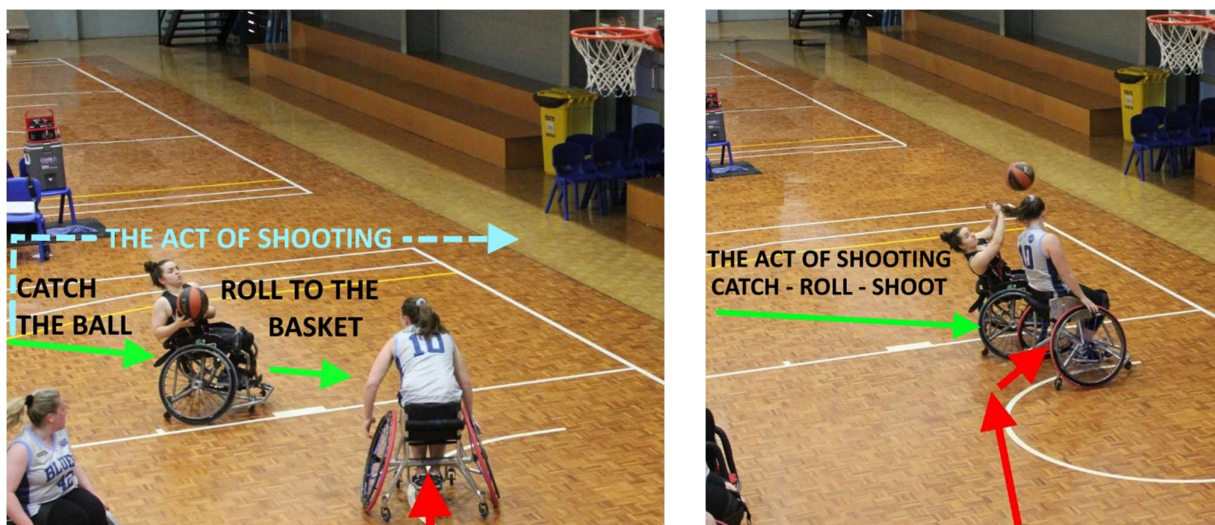
### WHEN IS A PLAYER CONSIDERED TO BE IN THE ACT OF SHOOTING?

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:

- He holds the ball in one or both hands and with the wrist cocked in the shooting position in preparation for shooting the ball .... OR ....
- He holds the ball in one or both hands and rolls into the opponent's 3 second area to start a lay-up.

For a layup, **catching the ball from the dribble or from a pass in order to shoot** is regarded as the beginning of the act of shooting. The FIBA player **steps** to the basket to do a lay-up. The IWBF player **rolls** towards the basket to do a lay-up.

The following sequence of two photos shows the player with the ball doing a wheelchair lay-up. In *Photo 1*, the act of shooting started when the ball was caught from the dribble or from a pass. In *Photo 2*, after catching the ball, the player with the ball rolls to the basket to shoot a layup. Rolling to the basket is part of the act of shooting a wheelchair lay-up. During this play, any contact by a defender to the player with the ball is considered to have occurred during the act of shooting.



Photos (above): Basketball Australia and WNWBL



There can be differences in the way an IWBF player lines up his shot compared to a FIBA player. The IWBF player may take a little bit longer to line up his shot compared to a FIBA player. While lining up his shot, the IWBF player may be sitting stationary or he may be rolling into the key for a lay-up.

This photo (*left*) shows WHITE 9 sitting stationary, aiming his shot. He is holding the ball with both hands in a position from which he could either shoot or pass. He is looking at the basket to line up his shot. WHITE 9 has started the act of shooting.

Any illegal contact by the defence to WHITE 9 at this moment should be regarded as having occurred during the act of shooting.

Photo: Basketball Australia

## HOLDING THE BALL UP HIGH TO LINE UP THE SHOT

### The Act of Shooting has started



A player who has an arm extended up high, balancing the ball in the hand while lining up a shot, is considered to have started the act of shooting. This is a very common action by taller players and by high point players.

The players with the ball in these two photos are holding the ball up high in one hand, lining up a shot for goal.

Each is in the act of shooting even though neither player has started to propel the ball towards the basket.

If either player is fouled at this moment, the foul has occurred during the act of shooting.



Photo: Kevin Bogetti-Smith

Photo: Womens National Wheelchair Basketball League, Basketball Australia

Each of the players with the ball in the photos below is holding the ball up high in one or two hands, lining up a shot for goal. If any of these players is fouled at this moment, the foul has occurred during the act of shooting.

Photos: Gucci Fotografie (Wouter Terryn)



## Floor Position and the Opportunity To Shoot

The player's floor position is an important consideration for the officials when determining whether a player is in the act of shooting. For example, after gathering the ball, a player may be rolling the last few metres towards the basket and, in the judgement of the official, is ready to shoot a layup. If the player is fouled in this position, the official should penalise this illegal contact as a shooting situation.



Photo: Wheelchair Basketball South Africa.

If the player was to perform exactly the same action in his back court after taking a defence rebound and then roll away from his team's basket, the official is not likely to consider him to be in the act of shooting. The player would be at the wrong end of the court to be shooting.

In this photo (*left*), BLUE 5 has picked up the ball and is rolling the last few metres into the key. He is holding the ball ready to shoot. He may not have started to actually push the ball towards the basket, but he is considered to be in the act of shooting. BLUE 5 is in exactly the same situation in wheelchair basketball as a FIBA player who has gathered the ball and is stepping into the key for a layup. Rolling into the key with the ball is the equivalent to a moving FIBA player who catches the ball and then steps in for a layup. Both are considered to have started the act of shooting.



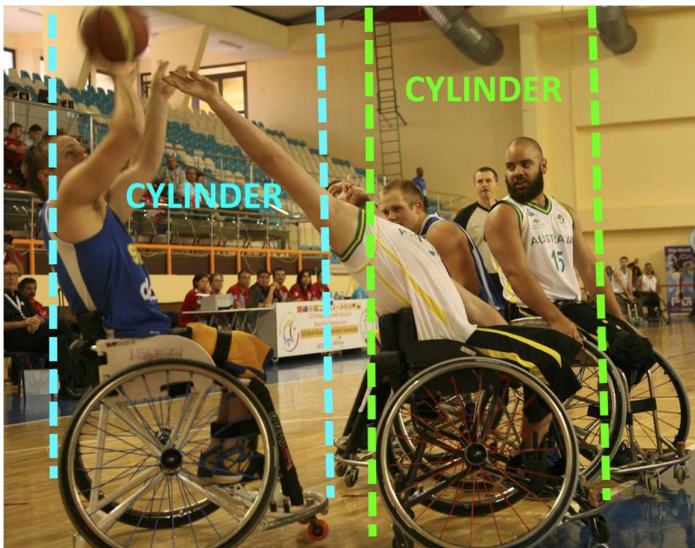
### Question: Is he going to shoot or is he going to pass?

The official may sometimes be in doubt about whether the player with the ball is going to shoot or is going to pass. In these circumstances, if illegal contact has taken away the opportunity for the player to shoot, the official should give the benefit of the doubt to the player with the ball and penalise the contact as a shooting foul.

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. BLUE 12 in this photo (*left*) is rolling into the key for a layup and is lining up his shot. He is not holding the ball in a traditional shooting position and he still has the opportunity to pass. But if he is fouled at this moment, the officials should consider him to be in the act of shooting.

Photo: Wheelchair Basketball South Africa.

## Defence Contact within the shooter's cylinder



This photo (*left*) shows the cylinders of the BLUE shooter and the WHITE defender.

The WHITE defender is reaching out of his cylinder and into the cylinder of the shooter. If the defender makes contact with the arm of the shooter while he has possession and is making a normal shooting action, the responsibility for contact lies with the defender.

If the shooter releases his shot and then follows through into the cylinder of the WHITE defender, and contacts the arm of the defender within the defender's cylinder, the official may decide that the contact did not affect the shot, and make a *No Call*.

Photo: Matt Wells and IWBF

## WHEN DOES THE ACT OF SHOOTING END?

The end of the act of shooting is different in IWBF basketball compared to FIBA basketball.

The act of shooting of a FIBA player who has jumped to shoot continues until he lands.

In IWBF basketball, the act of shooting continues until the shooter has completed “the follow through” of the shot. The intent of this is that after the ball leaves the shooter’s hand, **the shooter is allowed a moment to regain his balance**. It is a wheelchair-specific rule because the IWBF player does not leave the ground to shoot.

The airborne FIBA player who jumps to shoot cannot continue to play until after he lands.

The IWBF shooter cannot continue to play after shooting until he regains his balance.

Regaining balance after the IWBF player’s shot is released takes only a brief moment.

If the IWBF shooter is fouled a moment after the shot has left his hand and while he is still off balance, he is considered to still be in the act of shooting. (Reference: IWBF Rulebook: Art 15.1; 15.2; 15.3)

A wheelchair basketball referee must learn to recognise when a wheelchair player has regained his balance. This recognition is **essential** when judging whether the act of shooting has ended.

## THE MOMENT THAT THE ACT OF SHOOTING ENDS WILL VARY ACCORDING TO THE DEGREE OF DISABILITY OF THE SHOOTER.

The time that a shooter needs to recover his balance after releasing a shot for goal may vary according to the disability of the shooter. A low point player may take a moment longer to regain his balance compared to a higher point player. But it will only take a brief moment.

It is up to the officials to decide whether or not the act of shooting has ended when illegal defence contact occurs.

A 4.5 player may regain balance almost as soon as he releases the ball. He may release his shot and then, almost immediately, be sitting balanced, with his arms held up in the shooting position.

GREEN 15 (*right*) is a higher point player. She has released her shot. The ball has travelled a long way from her hands. She is sitting balanced. She has finished the act of shooting. If GREEN 15 is fouled at the moment shown in this photo, the foul would not be classed as being a foul committed during the act of shooting.



Photos: Basketball Australia

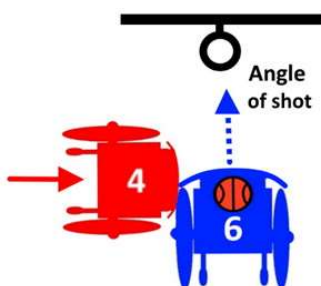


GREEN 33 (*left*) has just released his shot but he is still in the act of shooting. The ball has barely left his hand. He has not completed his follow-through after releasing the shot, so he has not regained his balance.

A defence foul that contacts GREEN 33 at this moment has occurred during the act of shooting.

## Pushing and Turning The Shooter's Chair Away From The Basket On A Shot

*Figure L.1 Pushing and Turning The Shooter's Chair*

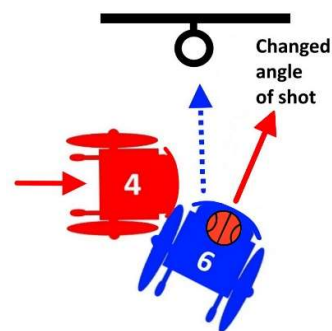


BLUE 6 has the ball. BLUE 6 is stationary and about to shoot.

RED 4 pushes the side of the horizontal bar of BLUE 6 and, in *Figure L.2*, this turns BLUE 6's chair away from the basket.

**Decision:** PUSHING Foul by RED 4 during the act of shooting.

*Figure L.2*

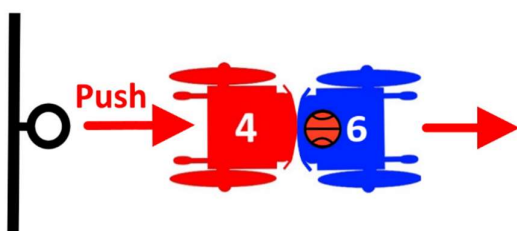


### Comment

This type of foul occurs frequently in wheelchair basketball. The **baseline** official may miss seeing this type of contact under the basket if he lifts his vision and watches the flight of the ball and ignores what is happening at floor level. He must ensure that his vision includes a good view of the gap between the chairs at floor level.

## Pushing The Shooter's Chair Backwards On A Shot

*Figure L.3 Pushing The Shooter's Chair Backwards*



BLUE 6 has the ball. BLUE 6 is stationary and is about to shoot. RED 4 pushes forwards into the horizontal bar of BLUE 6, and pushes BLUE 6's chair backwards as he shoots.

**Decision:** PUSHING Foul by RED 4.  
(Reference: IWBF Rulebook Definition - Article 33.14 - Pushing)

In this photo (*right*), the BLUE defender is pushing forwards into the foot rests of the WHITE shooter. If the official decides that the defender has disadvantaged the shooter by pushing the shooter's chair backwards or by bumping it heavily during the shot, this is a Pushing foul by that defender.

Contact by the defender may appear slight but often a significant disadvantage is caused to the shooter if his chair is pushed backwards during the act of shooting. If the ball has just been released when significant contact occurs and the official decides that the shooter has not yet regained his balance, this would be a foul in the act of shooting.

*Note:* An offensive rebounder in wheelchair basketball who taps the ball towards the opponents' basket is considered to be in the act of shooting.

*Photo: Matthew Wells for IWBF*



## The Attempt To Shoot While The Shooter's Arm Is Being Held

The arms of the player with the ball might be held by the defence so that the player cannot shoot the ball; yet he may be making an attempt to shoot, even though the arm is not in the classic shooting position.

(Reference: IWBF Rulebook - Articles 15.1; 15.2; 15.3).

In this photo (*left*), GREEN is attempting to shoot. A defender is holding her left arm. GREEN has not started to push the ball towards the basket but she is in the act of shooting, even though she may not be able to propel the ball towards the basket with a normal shooting action.

*Photo: Wheelchair Basketball South Africa*



## Finally ... some personal observations from the author.

# The Best Referees Know More Than Just The Rules

I consider it essential for an IWBF wheelchair basketball referee to have a thorough understanding of the classification of players and the way that classification affects how the game is played and refereed. Referees need this knowledge to be able to competently judge advantage/disadvantage when contact occurs. The degree of disability of a player affects the nature and degree of contact to his chair that will disadvantage him.

When I was refereeing IWBF basketball, I was always aware of the classification of any player in my area of responsibility on court. I knew how much contact to his chair would cause him a disadvantage. I knew whether the player could lean sideways, backwards or forwards to catch passes or to throw passes or to take rebounds. Being able to recognise these abilities helped me with my judgement of advantage/disadvantage if contact occurred.



*Photo: Kevin Bogetti-Smith and Wheelchair Basketball Canada*

This photo shows the differences in the chair setup of a low point classification player and a high point classification player.

The seat of BLACK 11 is angled back steeply, tilting down towards the backrest of the chair. He sits wedged back into his seat and is strapped securely into the seat. His knees are up higher than his waist. As a low point classified player, all of this helps his stability in his chair. But this also restricts his upward reach.

BLACK 8 is a **high** point player. His seat is not angled back. It is approximately parallel to the floor. It is nearly double the height from the floor of the low pointer's seat. He is sitting upright in his chair, not jammed back into the seat. His chair has larger diameter wheels. This means that he sits higher off the floor compared to BLACK 11.

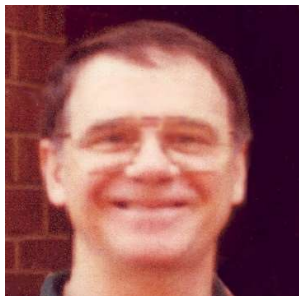
Learn all you can about the players before you start the game. Check the scoresheet team lists. If player classification cards are being used, check the cards to identify the low point, mid-point and high point players. Watch the teams' pre-game warm-ups and observe the setup of the chairs. Usually, the way a player is sitting and moving in his chair and the way his chair is set up are all that the experienced official needs to be able to recognise the high point and low point players. For example: Has the player set himself up high in his chair? Is his seat angled back towards the backrest? Are his wheels of maximum size or are they smaller than maximum size?

So, to be a good wheelchair referee, you should learn the wheelchair principles of contact and the wheelchair basketball rules.

But remember that the best referees know more than just the rules.

## Ross Dewell

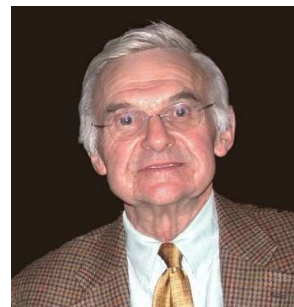
## Acknowledgements



**Greg Love**

I would like to re-state my thanks to two colleagues: former FIBA and IWBF referee, **Greg Love** of Australia, and the former IWBF Technical Commission Chairman, **Dr Armand "Tip" Thiboutot** of the U.S.A.

Their assistance, support and great patience over a long period during my writing of the first edition of this book in the 1990s was invaluable.



**Tip Thiboutot**

Greg and Tip constantly examined and challenged my PATH theory during its early years of development. Their input strengthened the final outcome. Greg provided many suggestions, and offered constructive criticism of the text during the preparation of the draft of the first edition of this book that I released in 1996 at the Atlanta Paralympic Games. I leaned heavily on Tip's eagle eye for detail in the proof-reading and editing of the final draft.

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*The author (right) with Norbert Kucera  
GOLD medal game  
Atlanta Paralympics 1996*

*Photo: The author's personal collection*

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