

# NBA makes wrong decision

That absurd dotted line under the basket obviously wasn't enough for the NBA, because the league created yet another policy on Sunday aimed at sacrificing the defensive integrity of the game — one good foul deserves two hard slaps.



Scott Pesznecker

after being knocked hard to the floor by the 76ers Matt Geiger, retaliated with an open-handed swing at the Philadelphia center.

The NBA's response? To hit Geiger with a two-game suspension, then fine the 76ers \$50,000 — for doing nothing.

The league's reasoning? Geiger was trying to hurt Miller.

"Teams and coaches will be held accountable for the reckless actions of their players," NBA executive Rod Thorn said on Sunday.

Never mind the criticism that at halftime, Geiger told a nationally televised audience on NBC that Philadelphia coach Larry Brown told his players that they needed to commit more hard fouls on their opponents.

Sounds bad, doesn't it? If Brown really did tell his players to go out and hurt people, he should be fined. Actually, he should be fired.

But what Geiger said at halftime was anything but that. He said that his team needed to commit more

"playoff fouls."

And there's nothing wrong with that.

A potent offense may go far in the regular season, but no team can win a championship without strong defense. Characteristics of a solid defense include chasing down loose balls, getting into the passing lanes, keeping the opponent away from the basket and preventing easy shots.

But there's more intensity in the playoffs. Way more intensity, because suddenly, every shot an opponent takes could potentially be the bucket that ends a team's season.

So when playoff time roles around, the act of fouling becomes a more accepted part of the game.

“Matt Geiger said that his team needed to commit more ‘playoff fouls.’ And there’s nothing with that.”

Really, it has to. Sometimes, somebody has to be fouled hard to be kept from scoring a basket.

That's what "playoff fouls" are all about.

Most everyone who watches basketball has seen it when a player streaks down court for an easy hoop, only to be upended and thrown to the ground by a desperate, charging defender.

That kind of foul has no honor. When a player is flying toward the hoop in the open court, it's hard to commit a "clean" flagrant foul without jeopardizing that player's health. Many players get hurt in that kind of situation.

But when Geiger committed his

two flagrant fouls on Miller, neither one was of that fashion. One happened on a baseline drive in the halfcourt offense, the other was on a jumper attempt.

Geiger used good judgment when he fouled Miller because the Pacer was not in any danger.

Yet he was suspended for two games.

And Miller only got suspended for one?

In making its decision, the NBA told basketball fans that it would rather have players pick fights than play hard, and that's just wrong.

But the league has to protect its superstars, right? It has to keep those game scores high, and it can't have its big-time scorers — such as Reggie Miller — be afraid to go to the hoop.

Right? "I understand where the league is coming from with the one-game suspension for retaliating," Miller said on Sunday in a released statement. "But I can't let someone intentionally try to hurt me for the sake of winning one basketball game. And that's all they will win is one basketball game."

The 76ers won that game by two points — but remember that Reggie's retaliation came when his team was down by 18.

Seems to me that Miller was frustrated when he attacked Geiger. But afterwards, rather than take responsibility for his actions, Miller blamed his outburst on Geiger. Claiming that Geiger was "trying to hurt me."

What a pansy. No wonder why he doesn't have a ring.

Scott Pesznecker is a sports reporter for the Oregon Daily Emerald. His views do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald. He can be reached via e-mail at jflak1@aol.com

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