

# Solution to Softness and Techs in the NBA: Eject the Refs!

By Maddy Grant

I've watched plenty of basketball games this season that were "manipulated" by the refs' calls. One bad and unjust call will fire up any fan. I'm not a crazy fan, but I can't stand watching games lately because the refs don't allow the players to show enough passion. Basketball is all about beating your opponent, and there shouldn't be a problem if you want to show out. It's a competition. Basketball is the players' job, and if they can't show intense excitement, then it's not as fun for them or the fans. I don't think that the players should be allowed to do *anything* they want, but they certainly should be able to do things like trash talk and hang on the rim. The game is becoming soft nowadays. If you watch old games from the before 2000, you'll see the difference in passion and physicality.

One reason for this stems from one of the refs' main powers: ejections. And they use them more often than James Harden flops.

To get ejected, a player usually must commit two technical fouls first. Technical fouls are given for unsportsmanlike conduct and flagrant fouls. And refs have been going crazy with the techs. For *some* recent examples:



1. Kyle Lowry, passing the ball to a ref after whistle was called;
2. LeBron James, tugging the rim to jump off after a dunk;
3. Tre Mann, trash talking (for three seconds) after he dunked;
4. Russell Westbrook, *making a face* at an opposing player after making a tough layup;
5. Tari Eason, politely talking to the ref about a call he disagreed with;
6. Issiah Collier, clapping after he got fouled;
7. Dejounte Murray, sitting on bench and apparently committed the sin of not wanting to talk to the ref (Murray told him "Never mind" – oh, the horror!);
8. Luca Doncic, tossing ball to the ref ... after the ref asked for the ball;
9. Victor Wemby, who bounced the ball "too hard."

Now for what's often the next unfortunate step: *ejections*. During the 2023-24 NBA season, there were 29 ejections. If you don't already know, that's a lot for one season, especially considering that players usually need two technicals before ejections. Having the power to eject players is special and often abused. Referees affect a whole team's scheme when they eject a player. And it's often not a bench player who gets ejected, which makes me think refs shouldn't be able to eject a team's "star" players unless they have done something *absurd*.

Some people will strongly disagree with that because they think the rules for ejections should be consistent, and I see that, but if you are considered the "star" player on your team, then you

earned that, and it shouldn't be stripped just because a ref is having a bad day. Not to mention that if you're a star – let's be real – your team needs you more than if you're a bench-warmer. The lack of accountability by refs makes millions frustrated. The refs make *clear* bad calls so many times each game, and when a coach or player tries to speak on it, somebody ends up getting fined. There have been a few times when the refs came back and owned up to making the wrong call, especially after a video challenge *showed* them to be wrong, but coaches don't get enough video challenges to keep up with the mistakes. In games when there are controversial calls, refs should stop and rewatch them multiple times. Yes, they already do this *sometimes*, but it needs to happen more often. While it would make the games longer, as a fan I would rather have the *right* call made. The games shouldn't just continue after a clearly bad call. By the time a game ends, bad calls often "tamper with" the result.

And for the refs who don't choose to accept accountability, what consequences do they get? According to ESPN.com, NBA commissioner Adam Silver says, "We don't publicize discipline for officials. We don't think that will be appropriate." The NBA is intent on keeping a good image, which means they won't publicly call out their refs. But this is unfair to the players and coaches. If players and coaches can get publicly fined for absolutely nothing, then refs need to be publicly held accountable, too. If you agree, hit [this feedback form](#), choose "Officiating" as the topic, and share your thoughts. It's a matter of fairness, and that's what we want in sports, isn't it?