

## Basketball's Great Debates

Under the category of Basketball's Greatest Controversies, we're not talking about ephemera like, Who's the GOAT? Or, what's the right number of teams to make the NBA playoffs, or the NCAA tournament? Or, whether one class was enough, or is 4 too many?

What we're talking about under the category of Basketball's Greatest Controversies arises from the Rules of the Game, and mostly, though not entirely, from James A. Naismith's 13 rules as published in December of 1891 and disseminated all over America by the middle of 1892.

Naismith's Original 13 Rules are remarkable in at least 2 respects. First, the game of basketball, well, it caught on pretty much from the time the 1<sup>st</sup> ball was tossed up, as Naismith said in his memoirs. And, it came from those 13 simple pronouncements. And, of course, it continued to grow into the worldwide phenomenon that it is today. What is even more remarkable, however, is how simple and ambiguous those 13 Original Rules really are, or were. And, so, over the 1<sup>st</sup> 10, 20, 30, 50, even 75 years of basketball, there were many controversies over Naismith's simple rules and how to make them better. What follows is a summary of those controversies, *listed in the more or less chronological order in which the controversies were resolved*. Toward the bottom are a few more recent controversies having only tangentially to do with Naismith's Rules.

### #9. 5-on-a-Side

#### Resolved everywhere by about 1896

Naismith's Original 13 Rules called for **9 players on a side!** There were 9-on-a-side in the 1<sup>st</sup> game ever played, Naismith's "demonstration game" on December 21, 1891, at the YMCA International Training School in Springfield, MA, and there were 9-on-a-side in the 1<sup>st</sup> intercollegiate game ever played anywhere, which happened to be played in St. Paul, MN, on a handball court on the St. Paul campus of the University of Minnesota vs. a team from Hamline University, also located in St. Paul.

But, some found 9 on a side to be a bit of a crowd. On the other side of the coin, in many places, there weren't 18 boys or young men available to play a game. And, so, within a few years, probably by 1896 or 1897, players and teams and coaches in most places had decided that 5-on-5 was the way to go.

Well, except, of course, for those who didn't. They were schoolteachers and physical educators who thought that a full-court 5-on-5 game was too strenuous for some of their charge, usually meaning women and girls. And, so, the 6-on-6 game was invented. 3 players on each team played offense, while 3 played defense. Each 3-some stayed in its half of the court throughout. It was like 2 3-on-3 games, but connected by an outlet pass that crossed the center line into that other zone. And, while the girls in one zone played, the girls in the other zone rested. This became the game of choice for American schoolgirls, and it was played throughout most of the country from the very beginning through about 1940. In Iowa, however, the girls game was more popular than the boys. The girls had a 6-on-6 state tournament continuously from the 1920s to the 1990s, and it drew more fans than the boys tournament most of those years. Iowa initiated a girls 5-on-5 tournament in 1984 but it was only in 1993 that the 6-on-6 tournament was discontinued.

### #10. The Cage Game

#### Abandoned in Minnesota by about 1915

Did you ever wonder why basketball is sometimes referred to as the "cage game" and basketball players are described as "cagers"? The basket was never called a "cage." In the old days, they called it a "ring."

No. One of the early dilemmas was caused by Naismith's rule that said that, when the ball went out of bounds, it would belong to the team that **touch it 1<sup>st</sup> after it went out of bounds!** As a result, scrambles for loose balls out of bounds were at least as frenzied as scrambles for loose balls on the court of play. It probably was sometime

around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that ballers agreed that when the ball went out of bounds, it should belong to the team other than the one that had ***touched it last before it went out of bounds.***

Still, other folks came up with another means of dealing with this problem. They encased the court in chicken wire. No, really. That kept the ball and the players on the court, and it also kept the fans off the court. The ball could not and did not go out of bounds, so you didn't have to worry about who touched it first or who touched it last or whatever. The cage, in other words, was effective. The problem with the cage was that it was costly and it rendered a room unsuitable for other kinds of uses. Still, there were instances of cage games in Minnesota at least as late as 1915 or so.

#### **#4. Eligibility**

##### **Resolved in Minnesota by about 1920**

It took and it takes 3 ingredients to put together a basketball game. One was and is young men and women to make up the teams. Another was and is a room big enough to accommodate a game. And, third, an organization that sponsors a basketball team or two probably has some kind of philosophical commitment to physical activity and physical fitness. In the decade after Naismith invented basketball, the game was played mostly at YMCAs and in armories, among the so-called militias, analogous to today's National Guard. Little by little, there were more and more teams sponsored by colleges and other educational institutions.

After 1900 or so, the game shifted very dramatically to those educational institutions. That was where the young men and women were. Initially, the teams were formed by the students themselves, and the faculty and administration mostly looked the other way. Left to their own devices, however, students became notorious for recruiting non-students on to their teams. They would be damned if they were going to lose to ***those guys.*** So they recruited older boys and men, some of whom had never even attended school. They were called "ringers," because the basket was sometimes called a "ring."

Both students and non-students sometimes got into arguments with their opponents for reasons that are mentioned in this essay. Sometimes they got into violent arguments—that is, they got into fights. The non-students, rightly or wrongly, were perceived as more likely to lack the scruples of the students and to be more likely to have caused such arguments and disagreements. The schools were embarrassed by such episodes but had no control over them. Finally, they decided that they had to take control. The result, in the colleges, was college conferences. In the high schools, it was statewide athletic associations. In Minnesota, such an association was formed in 1913. The state tournament was the carrot. But, if a school wanted to play in the association's tournament—which quickly became the state high school basketball tournament that we have today—they would play by the association's rules. That was the stick. Uniform eligibility rules were quickly developed and enforced. Any number of teams were disqualified from the tournament in the 1<sup>st</sup> couple of decades, many for playing boys who were beyond 20 years of age. The eligibility crisis was pretty much resolved nationwide by 1920.

#### **#1. The Dribble**

##### **Part 1: Yay or Nay?**

##### **Resolved everywhere in 1923**

Naismith's Original 13 Rules stated that ***a player may not run with the ball. Precisely how the ball was to be advanced was not stated.*** But, it seemed (and it seems) clear enough that Naismith meant for the ball to be advanced by passing it. Many players and coaches found that passing alone was not a sufficient means for moving the ball, however. Who invented the dribble, and when, and where? We do not know and we will never know. But, surely we know why. It was necessary. Perhaps many different players came up with the idea of the dribble in many different places, independently, at more or less the same time. Several years before 1900, the dribble was pretty well established almost everywhere.

But, for some, the passing game was a game of skill and finesse, while the dribbling game was thought of as rough and crude. In 1923 Walter "Doc" Meanwell, a highly successful coach with 3 mythical national championships in his

1<sup>st</sup> 6 years at Wisconsin, became chairman of the national rules committee. He proposed to ban the dribble, and his committee voted to do just that. They then retired to watch a game featuring the world's greatest team, the professional barnstormers, the Original Celtics, who themselves eschewed the dribble. After the game, Celtics star Nat Holman, who was himself also a college coach at CCNY, made an impassioned speech to the committee. Sure, he said, the world's greatest team could move the ball without the dribble. But, most other players at most other levels needed the dribble to keep the ball moving. The committee voted again, and the dribble was saved.

### #3. Fouls and #6. Free Throws

#### Part 1: How Much Is Too Much

#### Part 1 issues mostly resolved everywhere by about 1925

There were several things that were against Naismith's rules—running with the ball; physical contact with players on the other team, especially players who were in the act of shooting; and so on. Naismith proposed free throws—shots at the basket that the opponent was not allowed to defend—as a means of discouraging any and all such **violations of the rules**. Yes, in the early days, teams shot free throws when their opponents were guilty of what came to be known as “travelling.” It was only sometime in the 1920s that “violations” like travelling and carrying the ball and so on would be treated differently than “fouls,” which meant illegal contact with opposing players. And, it was only sometime in the 1920s that it was decided that “violations” would be punished by a change of possession rather than by free throws. All of this took more than a quarter-century of trial-and-error to get resolved.

But, that was nothing compared to a broader, **overriding dislike of free throws**. Early on, many thought that free throws represented a poor test of skill, and that games ought to be decided by field goals. Disagreements over what was a foul and how many should be called was by far the most frequent source of friction between teams. This was exacerbated by the fact that, in the early days, each of two competing teams would name one referee. There was no hope that they would name officials who were unbiased. The only hope was that the biases of the 2 referees would balance out. That proved to be a false hope.

In one well-documented case, the Minneapolis YMCA came down to Red Wing to play Red Wing's elite senior men's team. Throughout the 1<sup>st</sup> half, the Minneapolis official called all of the even numbered fouls—that is, the 1<sup>st</sup> foul, the 3<sup>rd</sup> foul, and so on; the 1<sup>st</sup> of each pair of fouls. The Red Wing referee would immediately call a foul against Minneapolis, but never called a single foul that was not in direct response to a Red Wing foul called by the Minneapolis referee. When questioned, he said that the fairest approach to fouls was to keep them even—one apiece, 2 apiece, 3 apiece, and so on. The problem, obviously, was that the Red Wing referee made no attempt to justify his fouls called as really being legitimate fouls. They were only called in order to keep the fouls even, which in fact did not seem fair at all. At half-time, the Minneapolis team walked off the court, never to return.

This type of thing was not at all uncommon. Many teams, especially at the lower levels (i.e. high schools), refused to play many of their most natural rivals because of previous disagreements like these. No wonder, then, that as soon as central authorities like college conferences and the MSHSL came into being, most of them took over from the teams the job of naming game officials. Officials would no longer be members of the teams' entourage.

There was also the question of whether free throws really discouraged violations, especially considering that most teams were able to make only about one-third to one-half of their free throws anyway. So—again continuing until the early 1920s—teams were allowed to name a **designated free throw shooter**, who would shoot all of his team's foul shots regardless of who had been fouled. Having your best free throw shooter shoot all of your free throws probably meant that teams made 2 to 5 more free throws per game, thus slightly better serving to penalize the team committing the most fouls.

This practice was discontinued about the time that “violations” no longer resulted in a free throw. So, with free throw attempts declining by as much as one-half to two-thirds, it mattered much less whether a team made more of their free throws or not. All—or, almost all—suddenly was well. Not only did free throws come to have less

impact on who won and who lost, which was important to some people, but fewer free throws also gave fans and coaches and journalists a sense that there was less *inaction* on the court.

Specifically, another angle to the issue of how many fouls to call, and whether foul shooting should be allowed to decide who won and who lost, had also to do with how much action was called for in a basketball game and how much inaction could be tolerated. Free throws were perceived as inaction, and so free throws also were bad for this reason. Free throws were boring and they made the games too long. This reinforced the idea that fewer fouls and fewer free throws was a good thing. During the late 1920s and into the 1930s, fouls and free throws were at all-time lows. In Minnesota, Buffalo committed just one foul in a game on March 27, 1926. On March 23, 1923, Minneapolis North and Mountain Lake each committed 2 fouls in a state tournament 1<sup>st</sup> round game between the 2. North won 28-15.

Against all odds, Breckenridge tied Buffalo's record of one foul as late as 1978. The problem with so few fouls is that it quite reliably indicates that there was almost no real defense being played, but that's a different story.

### **#5. The Dead Ball/The Stall**

**Became an issue everywhere by 1925, more or less resolved in 1954**

The issue of too many free throws was emphatically resolved by 1930, or so it seems. But many still thought that free throws were boring and they wanted still fewer of them. The coaches took matters into their own hands in what we refer to as "the dead ball era," when most Minnesota teams and coaches stressed ball control and defense. The game slowed down to a crawl and, frankly, it wasn't that hard to defend a team that was crawling around without necessarily committing fouls. Never was the game played so passively. As a result, in 1930s high school ball, many games saw as few as 5 or 6 fouls called, and just as few free throws attempted. If the problem was free throws, problem solved.

If the sight of 2 teams crawling around—OK, walking around—the basketball court was the problem, well, that remained a problem from about 1925 up until about 1950. The period from 1925 to 1935 saw a particularly passive style of play. In 1953, Red Wing beat Braham 92-73 in the Region 4 final. Their combined total of 165 points broke the previous record for a regional game by a ridiculous 49 points. This stimulated much reminiscing about earlier Red Wing champions. Louis Nordly, star of the 1915 state champs, said, "We ran in our day, too." But Art Lillyblad, star of the 1933 champions, said, however, "Kids today are so much quicker." A member of Buffalo's 1931 runners-up said, "We just walked through our plays."

Most high schools did not have coaches until 1920 or even a few years later. Previously, left to their own devices, the kids ran and jumped and shot the ball at the basket. By about 1925, most teams had a coach, and the coaches embraced "the dead ball," the slower, ball control and defensively-oriented game. Honestly, it put the coach more in control of things, but it is also true that many a coach might have said, "I run the dead ball because I win with it."

Teams went so far as to play what was called a "back guard" who, on offense, stayed near the center line to be sure that the other team didn't get a breakaway and an easy basket. In effect, they were playing offense 4-against-5. No wonder people thought that a shooting percentage of 20 percent was pretty good.

In 1932, Northwestern coach Dutch Lonborg said that he did not know how basketball fans could bear to watch the game, because of its chronic lack of action. And, so, almost every rule having to do with time—the 5-second guarding rule; getting the ball across the center line, now known as "the time line" in 10 seconds; and so on—most of those rules we initiated in the early 1930s in response to this perceived crisis.

The stall remained a part of the game, of course, but it was used more and more just when one was ahead late in the game, rather than all game long. Still, people hated it, and the rulesmakers finally realized that a shot clock was the way to kill the stall. The NBA adopted the shot clock in 1954. It would be a good long while before the colleges adopted it, and longer yet for the high schools. Some of you may even remember coach Dean Smith and North

Carolina's "four corners," which was just another name for the stall. But, basketball's rulesmakers at every level now saw how to kill the stall. It just took them awhile to gather up their courage and do the job.

## **#2. The Center Jump**

**The debate began about 1920, and was resolved everywhere and forever in 1937**

When it came to the crisis of inaction, the real culprit was the center jump after every basket, like the face-off in hockey. That's what Naismith's Original 13 Rules called for. Every time a team, either team, scored a basket, they would troop out to center court and jump it up again. It wasn't just the relative inaction of jumping it up that was the problem. A team that was really good at winning the center jump could hold the ball almost for an entire game. They could prevent their opponent from getting possession and they could aspire to almost shut out their opponent, as in the 1914 state final in which Stillwater beat Winona 30-4. Of course, if you could hold your opponent to 4 points, you hardly needed 30 to win. You could win with 20, you could win with 10, you could win with 5. They not only could, they did win state tournament games with 20 points, 10 points and, well, OK, 7 points if not 5. So, the focus was on controlling the ball and shutting down (if not shutting out) your opponent. If, that is, you could dominate the center jump. If you could dominate the center jump, then you could sit on the ball pretty much all you liked.

Eventually people realized that it was the center jump more than any free throws that squeezed the life and the action out of the game, both in terms of the time spent walking out to the center jump circle after a basket and in terms of its influence over the coaches with their dead ball strategies.

So the center jump after every basket was mercifully put out of its misery in 1937, replaced by the concept of alternate possessions. Now, you couldn't aspire to shut out your opponent anymore. He would get his chance with the ball. He would score more points than before, so you would have to score more points than before. Within the next decade of Minnesota basketball, the jump shot, the low post and the fast break would all be adopted as ways to do that—ways to score more points than they had before. The game was never the same again, thank goodness!

## **#8. The Big Guy in the Low Post**

**The debate began about 1945, and was resolved in 1986**

With the end of the center jump came the necessity to find ways to outscore your opponent. The big guy in the low post was the 1<sup>st</sup> of 3 major offensive innovations in the years after 1937. (The others were the jump shot and the fast break.)

In the 1<sup>st</sup> 30 years of the Minnesota state tournament, the tallest boy had been Wayne Aanstad, 6-5½, from Thief River Falls in 1932. One of the earliest references to height had been to Otto Rortvedt of Henning in 1927. He was described as "a giant center," but his actual height was not reported. In 1931 Chisholm's Joe Malkovich at 6-2 was reported to be the tallest boy in the tournament. In 1933, Chisholm had Gordon Burich and Edward Turk, both 6-3. In 1935, all 5 Crosby-Ironton starters were 6 feet tall. That had never happened before. And, in 1939, St. Paul Central's starting lineup averaged 6-2. In 1941, 6-8 Jim Lewison of Owatonna was the tallest boy ever in Minnesota high school basketball, and he was good enough to lead the Big 9 in scoring.

Then, suddenly, in the 1940s, America and Minnesota started producing more boys than ever who were 6-8, 6-9, 6-10, even 7-feet tall. Was there something in the water? Nationally, 7-foot Bob Kurland led Oklahoma A&M to 2 NCAA titles and 6-10 George Mikan of DePaul led his team to an NIT title. In Minnesota, Jim McIntyre was the 1<sup>st</sup> big guy in the low post at 6-7½ as a junior and 6-9¼ as a senior. His team won 2 state titles in 1944 and 1945. In 1946 Austin won with boys who were 6-5 and 6-3. In 1947, Duluth Denfeld won with 6-7 Rudy Monson. In 1948, there were 4 6-5 players in the field. That had never happened before. In 1949, 6-6 Jim Fritsche led St. Paul Humboldt to the title, and in 1950 6-9 Don Dale led Robbinsdale to 2<sup>nd</sup> place. In 1951, 6-10 Bill Simonovich of Gilbert faced 6-8 Burdie Halldorson of Austin in the 1<sup>st</sup> round, while St. Thomas with 6-8 Johnny Horan won the Catholic title.

The old-timers hated the big guys. That's a fact. That wasn't how the game was meant to be played. Dale scored 80 points in 1950, second only to McIntyre at the time, including a game-high 22 in the final. But, after beating Robbinsdale in the final, Duluth Central coach Ray Moren opined that Robbinsdale would have been better if Dale had been kept on the bench.

So the rulesmakers did what they could to negate the big man. They widened the free throw lane to allow smaller but quicker players a snowball's chance of rebounding a missed free throw. They banned being in the lane for more than 3 seconds. They banned goaltending. They outlawed the dunk. OK, some of those are good ideas but, seriously, banning the dunk? Some fans and coaches had been arguing for getting more action and more excitement into the game for a quarter-century, but the rulesmakers went the other way. Hey, they said, let's make the most exciting play in the game illegal! Yeah! they replied—the old fogeys who hated the big guys, that is.

Dunk or no, McIntyre shot 50 percent from the field at a time when the old fogeys said that 20 percent was a good shooting percentage. Well, you were never going to win another game shooting 20 percent. So, all in all, the basketball world eventually embraced the big guy and, no matter what the rulesmakers did to stymie him, for a period of about 40 years, from the mid-1940s to the mid-1980s, he was the king of the court.

### **#7. The 3-Pointer Initiated 1986**

So, after spending 30 years trying to stymie and stifle the big guy, suddenly in 1986 the rulesmakers announced that they were going to try to help the big guy? Yeah, right. And, how did they do that? They introduced the 3-point shot—an extra point for extra-long field goals. The 3-point shot would stretch the defense, thereby providing more room for that good old (that is, the formerly hated) low post.

In the 1<sup>st</sup> 5 years of the 3-pointer at the Minnesota state tournament, teams averaged about 3 3-pointers per game out of about 9.5 shots, or about 32 percent. In the most recent 5 years (2017-2022) they averaged twice as many 3-point attempts and about twice as many makes. Well, a little less than twice as many because the 3-point shooting percentage actually fell from 32 percent to 30 percent over those 35 years. But, the truly amazing thing was that 2-point shooting percentages increased from 35 to 45 percent to 50 percent and more. Scoring increased about 12 points per game. About 5 of those extra points came from 3-pointers, but the other 7 points came from the better 2-point shooting percentage. So, the rulesmakers achieved what they wanted, right? On paper, it appeared that teams had picked up the pace (always a good thing), and that the rulesmakers had enabled that good old (formerly hated) low post offense (2 points at a time) to thrive again.

But, no, that's not really what happened. Most importantly, what happened was that the defense went on the attack. The rulesmakers meant to make it harder for the defense, but the defense responded by making it harder for the offense. Instead of mostly just defending the basket, they attacked the ball. They attacked the ball-handlers. They attacked the shooters. They challenged every shot. You young folks have no idea. That really hadn't happened much before the 1990s. Anyone who says the defenses weren't passive back in the day is not being entirely truthful.

So, now, defenses contest almost every shot, IF—a big IF, to be sure—IF they had the horses to do all of that. Of course, it took awhile for all of the ramification of the 3-pointer to shake out, from 1988 when the 3-pointer was adopted in Minnesota high schools until the mid-1990s. But once they did, the elite teams, the teams that had the horses, they went on the attack.

And, along with the ball-handler, they attacked the big guy in the low post. He was still the big threat, at least at the beginning of the 3-point era. So they attacked the big guy in the low post. They got physical. If he tried to set up in the low post like in the old days, they would push him right out of there. So says Kenny Novak, Jr. You can't run the old low-post anymore because the defense will just push him right out of there. The big guy now had to be mobile like everybody else. He had to move in and out of the lane. He had to cut to the rim like everybody else.

So, now, after 35 years of the 3-pointer, teams are still taking about the same number of shots as before. Scoring has increased because 1) some of them are worth 3 points and 2) they are making more of their 2s. And, the good old low post? In fact, whatever the rulesmakers said back in 1985, they had achieved the dreams of their fathers and grandfathers. They killed the big guy in the low post.

### **#1. The Dribble**

#### **Part 2: Carry That Weight**

**Resolved everywhere and without any debate whatsoever in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

### **#3. Fouls**

#### **and #6. Free Throws**

#### **Part 2: Not Too Much**

**Resolved everywhere and without any debate whatsoever in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

As a result of the 3-point shot, the defense got mad and it almost got even. It got physical. It went on the attack. It especially attacked the ball and the ball-handler. The fact is, the defense had reacted similarly back in the early days of the low post. Frustrated by the dominance of the big guys, the defenses got pushy, they got grabby, and fouls mounted up. Foul calls seem to have peaked in the 1950s, in Minnesota high schools and in the NBA. In time, officials started to look the other way, and foul calls declined, but then they peaked again from about 2000 to 2010.

In other words, with the advent of the 3-pointer, defenders again were stressed and they responded in the usual way. They fouled. They got vastly more aggressive than they had ever been. This created more change. Yes, of course, officials looked the other way, but that's not the whole of it.

For most of basketball history, a dribbler had to keep his hand on the very top of the ball. If you dribbled with your hand on the side of the ball, you were often found to be guilty of a carry. That was a violation that generally turned the ball over to the other team. And, if you put your hand underneath the ball with your palm facing up, well, you were definitely guilty of a carry, and the ball was definitely going to be turned over to the other team. It is pretty much a dead certainty that 99 percent of today's players, all the way up to the NBA, have no idea how much this practice has changed. Virtually every dribble at every level every day would have been a carry back in the day.

A ball-handler dribbling in the old fashioned way, with his hand strictly on top of the ball, well, he didn't stand a chance against the more aggressive defenses. So, now, the dribbler can not only put his or her hand on the side of the ball, he or she can put her hand under the ball with the palm facing up, and then dribble it by turning your hand all the way over so that your palm is facing down. That was the very definition of a carry. Now, it's cool because it's a necessity. Hopkins coach Kenny Novak, Jr., said that this is the single biggest change to the game of basketball that he has seen in his 50 years in the game. Bob McDonald said it was the jump shot. Others say the 3-pointer. Kenny says, no, it's the carry dribble. It allows a dribbler to maintain a secure handle on the ball in the face of the newly aggressive, physical defense.

Neither the more physical defense that has made "the carry" a modern-day necessity, nor "the carry" itself, was ever really debated by the rulesmakers, at least not in public. The defense got more physical and, for awhile, more fouls were called. But, nobody ever liked fouls and free throws anyway, and so the officials simply turned a blind eye. And, ball-handlers simply started carrying the ball in order to avoid an avalanche of turnovers and, eventually, the officials turned a blind eye. Otherwise, you'd have a foul or a carry, or both, on every possession. Who wants that?

Still, it is true that there are a lot of free throws being shot, but people no longer seem to care. Of course, part of the legacy of all sports is that games are getting longer. Baseball is finally trying to make them shorter. But games that used to take an hour, an hour-and-a-half now take three and three-and-a-half hours (college and NFL

football). Basketball games are more like two to two-and-a-half, but that's still more than the hour or hour-and-a-half that they used to take. So who cares about a few extra free throws.

They used to say that basketball was a non-contact sport. They don't say that anymore. This is the legacy of the 3-point shot and 21<sup>st</sup> century basketball. And, as was the case before 1900, it was no longer the rulesmakers calling the shots. The players and coaches, and those officials who learned to look the other way, they're the ones who made today's game of basketball what it is. For better or worse. The rulesmakers created the conditions with the 3-pointer, and then they got the heck out of the way.