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When the Line Between Safety and Showboating Blurs

By Robin Schoettler Fox



Photo Jordan Fong

In his first of several dunks during Friday's Mats game against Alhambra, 6' 9" Eric Obeysekere got a technical foul for what the referee felt was unsportsmanlike behavior - hanging on the rim for too long. Or maybe it was pulling himself above the rim (not seen in this picture) on the backswing after his legs had gone nearly parallel to the baseline, having approached the dunk full-throttle. No official details were released.

Safety, hang time, even the lift to get over another player. It's all a judgment call - for referee and player. When is it showboating?

"The rules allow Eric to protect himself and the player underneath," said Mats Coach Dave Brown, the day after the game. "It's a judgment call whenever a player hangs on the rim, so I won't second guess the referees. However, I know that Eric was only concerned with safety, and not interested in making a statement."

The technical did not impact the outcome of the game, which Miramonte won, 61-41. But when he made his next dunk, Obeysekere released nearly immediately. And fell on a teammate.

Two technical fouls in a single game would have meant ejection, and a one game suspension.

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