

## High School Basketball – Late Game Situations

### The Big Picture

- A regulation game is 32 minutes. The **last 3 minutes are magnified**—how we close matters.
  - Every play late in the game—good or bad—carries extra weight.
  - Great late plays usually come from **trusting team concepts**, not individual improvisation.
  - Remember: **2 points in the final minutes are the same as 2 points early in the game**. Every possession counts.
  - Our edge: we prepare for these situations in practice. **IQ + Confidence = Wins**.
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### Key Factors

- **Time + Score** drive every decision.
  - A good shot early may not be a good shot late.
  - Number of possessions matters—control the game.
  - Timeouts: 100% focus, no distractions. Listen, lock in, execute.
  - Dead balls: sprint to spots, rehearse the play, visualize success.
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### General Rules Late in Games

- Know the score and possession count. (Are we up 2? Down 4?)
  - No freelancing—**execution is everything**.
  - Trust our system; we've repped every late-game play in practice.
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### If We're Ahead

#### Defensively:

- Get stops. Don't trade baskets.
- No second-chance points—rebound.

- No unnecessary fouls—don't give away free points.
- Stay aggressive, but smart. No gambling for steals.
- Transition defense is non-negotiable.

#### **Offensively:**

- Use the clock. No shots before **:15** unless it's a wide-open layup.
  - Value the ball—no careless turnovers. Meet passes, strong snaps.
  - Keep the ball in the hands of our **trusted scorers/ball-handlers**.
  - Make free throws.
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#### **If We're Trailing**

##### **Defensively:**

- Must get stops. Don't trade baskets.
- Be ready to foul smartly (scouting tells us who).
- When fouling, **go for the ball**—no "flagrant" risks.

##### **Offensively:**

- Execute our quick-hitter plays with precision.
  - Take great shots—no rushed or contested looks.
  - Time + Score decide if we need a 3. Don't force it if a 2 works.
  - Protect the ball—**no turnovers**.
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 **Final Reminder:** Every possession matters. Trust preparation. Trust teammates. Trust the system.