

# Akron Beacon Journal

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## SKETBALL

# Will Ohio high school basketball use a shot clock anytime soon? What to know



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When a reporter asked Cavaliers guard Donovan Mitchell last month about watching high school basketball in Northeast Ohio, the NBA All Star immediately lobbied for change.

“First and foremost, we need a shot clock,” Mitchell said.

With the Ohio High School Athletic Association girls and boys basketball tournaments underway, this is the time of year hoops enthusiasts such as Mitchell flock to local gymnasiums in greater numbers.

None of those fans will see a shot clock used in Ohio.

Two years ago, the National Federation of State High School Associations announced a 35-second shot clock would be permitted in high school games by state association adoption beginning this season.

According to the NFHS, 17 states and the District of Columbia are using a shot clock in at least some of their high school basketball games this season. And two more states — Idaho and Minnesota — will adopt the shot clock for the 2023-24 season.

**Akron Buchtel heads to regional round:** Khoi Thurmon helps lead Griffins to OHSAA boys basketball district title on 18th birthday

**Darryn Peterson, CVCA lose to Glenville:** Royals stung again by season-ending defeat in OHSAA district championship game

However, implementing the use of the shot clock is not a front-burner issue in Ohio, OHSAA director of media relations Tim Stried explained.

Meanwhile, Mitchell is hardly the only one counting down the days until the shot clock arrives in this state.

Here's what to know.

**Stow defeats Jackson for district title: 'We're still going': Bulldogs relish trip to regional stage of OHSAA boys basketball tournament**

## **Do Ohio high school basketball coaches want the shot clock?**

The Beacon Journal polled local high school basketball coaches on whether they think the shot clock should be used in Ohio.

Of the 35 coaches who responded, 24 (68.6%) are in favor of the shot clock.

Sixteen of the respondents are girls coaches, and nine of them (56.3%) voted for the shot clock.

The other 19 who replied are boys coaches, and 15 of them (79%) said yes to the shot clock.

**Archbishop Hoban defeats Nordonia: Knights win second consecutive OHSAA boys basketball district title**

Keep in mind this is a small sample size. There are about 800 girls teams and 800 boys teams in Ohio, Stried said.

The NFHS's most recent polling data is from 2018. It revealed the majority of coaches and officials who responded were in favor of adopting a 35-second shot clock in a future season but opposed to adopting a 30-second shot clock. The majority of state associations that responded were against a 35- or 30-second shot clock.

Regarding support for the 35-second shot clock, 4,429 coaches (62%) and 4,666 officials (51%) favored it while 21 state associations (64%) were opposed.

The NFHS data didn't specify whether the coaches who were polled oversaw girls or boys teams.

## What are some arguments for the shot clock in high school basketball?

The absence of the shot clock can allow teams to significantly slow the pace of the game or even hold the ball for long periods of time.

It's not uncommon for a team less skilled than its opponent to essentially play keep away in an effort to neutralize better players.

Such tactics are not ideal for fans who spend money to watch games and don't enjoy the action grinding to a halt.

**Northwest girls basketball to state:** 'What a treat': A first state berth in the OHSAA tournament is sweet indeed

Several local coaches contend the lack of a shot clock isn't good for players who hope to compete at the collegiate level. The NCAA uses a 30 second-shot clock for women's and men's basketball. The NBA uses a 24-second shot clock.

“We're falling behind the rest of the world,” St. Vincent-St. Mary boys coach Dru Joyce II said. “Kids in Europe play with the shot clock their whole life, so they have the understanding of what it truly means. They recognize that in a game you're going to have more possessions. There's going to be more opportunities to score, more opportunities to defend.

“We need a shot clock. It's our game. We can't allow the rest of the world to take the game away from us.”

The length of a hypothetical shot clock in Ohio high school basketball is the subject of another argument. Buchtel boys coach Rayshon Dent likes the idea of 45 seconds. CVCA boys coach Matt Futch said 35 or 40 seconds makes sense to him.

Joyce and East boys coach Chad Hazard advocate for 30 seconds, which is the length of the shot clock the Buchtel boys encountered in December while competing in a tournament in Las Vegas.

“The pace of our game and the energy of our game was way different because of the shot clock,” Buchtel senior guard and City Series boys hoops player of the year Khoi Thurmon

said. “You have to shoot the ball. It makes you more engaged in the game. There's no breaks. Also, you've got to push the ball, and that's next-level basketball.”

## **What are some arguments against the shot clock in high school hoops?**

Although Dent is in favor of the shot clock, he fears more blowouts would be an unintended consequence of adopting it. Northwest girls coach Kevin Lower also opined games with a shot clock “could get ugly” because of lopsided scores.

“I like the shot clock, but I can understand why there's not one,” Dent said. “Because if you have a team that's less talented, you're looking at 100-point wins with shot clocks. Is that good for the sport or for the young [athletes'] morale, 'cause it is still amateur athletics. This is not professional.”

### **St. Vincent-St. Mary girls basketball: STVM just misses first trip to regional final since 2019**

North girls coach Jane Uecker guides an inexperienced team composed of many players who are relatively new to the sport. A former Bowling Green State University player, Uecker said she believes a slower game is conducive to greater and more diverse player participation in high school, so she prefers no shot clock.

Lower also voted against the shot clock in the Beacon Journal's poll, but he added a caveat.

“[The shot clock] takes a little bit away from the coaching strategy,” Lower said. “We play six girls, and if I had to shoot it every 30 seconds, [we would] be dead running back and forth.

“I know it's going to come down the pipeline, and it's going to happen. I think if it was at least 40 or 45 [seconds], I'd be fine with it.”

## **Why you are unlikely to see the OHSAA embrace the shot clock anytime soon**

The OHSAA is open to discussions about the pros and cons of the shot clock, but the association accepting the shot clock is not on the horizon, Stried explained. The OHSAA's board of directors hasn't even voted on the shot clock in Stried's 16 years with the association.

Stried said the two most glaring obstacles to implementing the shot clock statewide are tied to officiating and cost.

“There are more stoppages and resets and often confusion regarding issues with the shot clock than any other aspect of the game — and that's at the college and pro level,” Stried said. “Extrapolate that down to the high school level where you have often inconsistency [with] people running the [game] clock.

“The officiating side and how to use and run the shot clock is a really big topic. Now, that's not to say it could never happen, but it would definitely need a very gradual rollout.

“It would really need an additional person. The same person that runs the scoreboard cannot run the shot clock. That's a separate person.”

**A STVM succession plan is materializing:** Former Akron Zips standout Romeo Travis emerging as Dru Joyce II's St. Vincent-St. Mary heir

Based on Stried's research, the cost to outfit a high school gym with a pair of shot clocks is about \$4,000.

“That's an issue more for some schools than others,” he said, “but certainly there's a cost involved.”

## **How does the OHSAA view arguments in favor of the shot clock?**

Stried said instances in which no shot clock results in teams slowing the game and negatively affecting fan experience are akin to situations seen in pro sports. Two examples he cited are NBA coaches resting players in the name of load management and rough weather impacting Browns games at home. Fans aren't happy with those scenarios, either.

Stried concedes the shot clock adds an element of excitement to the college and pro levels. He also agrees it would help prepare high school players for the collegiate stage.

**Darryl, Darryn Peterson push each other:** Northeast Ohio natives have dreams of being brothers who play in NFL, NBA

However, Stried said only about 4 or 5% of high school basketball players compete in college.

“From the OHSSA standpoint, participation, safety, officiating, fairness, all those things are a full-time job,” Stried said. “We are trying to educate coaches. We're trying to keep kids safe. We're trying to make sure coaches have their CPR training.

“You could list a hundred things that we're trying to accomplish, and is having the shot clock on that list? No. It doesn't mean it might not ever happen, but we've got a lot more priorities than adding something that's going to aid the 4 or 5% that go on to play in college.”

Stried offers a rare perspective because, in addition to working for the OHSAA, he moonlights as a high school basketball official.

Even without a shot clock, Stried pointed out a rule prohibits an offense from merely holding the ball for a long stretch if a defender applies pressure within 6 feet of the player who has possession. When a player with the ball faces such pressure, he or she has 5 seconds to make an offensive move or lose possession due to a violation of the rule.

“At least in basketball, the defense can force the hand a little bit,” Stried said.

But whenever an offense chooses to hold the ball and the defense declines to pressure, you can bet the shot clock debate will reignite.

**STVM coach was born to represent Irish:** Despite administrative change, Carley Whitney is St. Vincent-St. Mary through and through

## **Which states use the shot clock in high school basketball?**

According to the NFHS, the following 17 states are using the shot clock in high school basketball this season:

Arizona (conferences 3A-6A only)

Arkansas

California

Iowa

Florida

Georgia (varsity only)

Maryland

Massachusetts

Montana

Nebraska (Class A only)  
New York  
North Dakota  
Rhode Island  
South Carolina (invitationals/showcases only)  
South Dakota  
Utah  
Washington

According to the NFHS, the following states will adopt the shot clock for next season:

Idaho  
Minnesota

*Michael Beaven helped poll local coaches about the shot clock. Nate Ulrich can be reached at [nulrich@thebeaconjournal.com](mailto:nulrich@thebeaconjournal.com). On Twitter: @ByNateUlrich.*