

League limits beer cup size, bans sales after 3rd quarter

From staff and wire reports

Aiming to prevent another brawl between players and fans, the NBA issued security guidelines for all its arenas Thursday, including limiting the size of beer cups and a ban on alcohol sales after the third quarter.

Notes

The directives cover security officers and fan behavior and apply to all NBA games — starting with Sunday's All-Star Game in Denver.

The guidelines were sent to all teams and included an NBA Fan Code of Conduct, which will be posted in all arenas. It says, "Players will respect and appreciate each and every fan," and it bars obscene or indecent messages on spectators' signs or clothing.

Players and fans brawled in the stands and on the court at the end of a game between the Indiana Pacers and Detroit Pistons in November. One of the most violent episodes in NBA history was sparked when Indiana's Ron Artest went into the seats after being hit by a cup tossed by a spectator.

The new NBA guidelines ban alcohol sales from the start of the fourth quarter, limit the size of alcoholic drinks to 24 ounces and limit buyers to two drinks per purchase. They also require designated driver programs at each arena.

"The NBA's announcement is welcome and consistent with our current operations," said Debbie Albert,



By Clarence Tabb Jr., *The Detroit News*, via AP

Starting point: The Pistons-Pacers brawl of Nov. 19 preceded the NBA's new alcohol policies at games.

an associate vice president with Aramark, the nation's largest concessionaire. "We adhere to those policies, and it has been our longstanding practice to encourage the use of designated driver programs."

The league plans to provide guidelines on the number of security officers teams should employ, as well as

guiding their tactics and placement.

The guidelines say fans can be ejected for breaking the rules, but NBA Commissioner David Stern said the league is not looking for ways to kick people out.

"We look at this as an opportunity to remind people that coming to an arena is an opportunity to share an experience of rooting a home team on to victory and booing the opposition, but not doing it in an antisocial way that goes against our civil society," Stern told *The Denver Post*.

The new policy will be effective if it is consistently enforced, said Jill Pepper, the executive director of the TEAM (Techniques for Effective Alcohol Management) Coalition. "What we saw was a real need to be consistent at all NBA arenas," Pepper said.