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BIG BROTHER'S WATCHING:

Brian Mahoney (AP)

When a coach in a future NBA finals accuses his players of poor rebounding or defense, he'll have a new way of proving he was right.

The NBA and STATS LLC are testing a new manner of statistical collection during the finals using six high-definition cameras placed around the arena. The cameras will track the 10 players on the court, the three officials and the ball. A dot placed over all of them can measure the heights and distances of their movements, allowing a coach to see, for example, how far a defender was from the player he was supposed to be covering.

"Player tracking is the heart of the new NBA stats collection," NBA executive vice president of operations and technology Steve Hellmuth said.

Hellmuth said teams are particularly interested in the program as a way to monitor defensive performances.

Hellmuth and STATS vice president of strategic planning Brian Kopp demonstrated how the system could also be used to evaluate the judgment of the officials by replaying a goaltending call against Orlando's Dwight Howard in Game 3. It showed the height of the ball in meters, and the number was reducing by the time Howard swatted it away, meaning it was on its way down and the call was correct.

The league hopes the technology will be ready for use by next season's playoffs, where it could be an asset to the teams involved and the broadcasts.

***AP Story picked up by more than 20 outlets including USA Today, SI.com, AOL Fanhouse, Sporting News.