2026 3rd Thru 6th Grade Youth Basketball Rules

Objective: By setting forth specific rules of basketball game…

Coaches will be more effective at coaching a consistent and reliable set of skills to the players. Their success will be displayed in the player's skills, actions, and increased knowledge of the game.

Players will become more effective on the basketball court and **learn the fundamental skills** in a uniform way. Each players abilities will be enhanced through streamline coaching, and players will have the skills needed to evolve into better players

- Good sportsmanship is required among players, coaches, parents, and referees at all times
- Jerseys must be tucked in at all times
- **10 ft rim(3rd&4th)** & **10 ft rim(5th&6th).** Women's **28.5 sized basketballs** will be used.
- All players must play a minimum of 2 quarters per game (or at least close)
- Substitutions can be made at any time when play is dead.
- Teams may start a game with 4 players
- Possession will be determined prior to the start of game by jump ball. All jump balls will be awarded based **ON THE POSSESSION ARROW**. Possession will be alternated at the start of each quarter.
- Two (2) timeouts will be allowed each game per team. One additional timeout allowed in overtime.
- All basketball violations will be enforced. No reaching fouls, double dribbling, traveling, illegal screens, offensive fouls, etc.

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- **Stealing**: Is allowed. Any pass or inbound pass may be stolen. A defender may steal directly from the dribble however **reaching fouls will be enforced**. **If the point differential is 10 pts or more, the team who is winning CANNOT steal the dribble OR the pass even in the last minute of each half. (2nd&4th quarters)**
- **Made basket**: Player from opposing team must pass the ball inbound from the baseline.
- **Offense**: All plays should be designed to include all players. Scoring will be 2 and 3 point shots. Three-point shots will be determined by marked line on courts. **A 3 second key violation will be enforced.** A 5 second offensive possession rule will be enforced **(discretionary): So a player must pass, shoot or dribble within 5 seconds of obtaining possession on the ball.** A 5 second inbound rule and a 10 second half court rule will also be enforced. During free throws, if a player is going to jump, they must START behind the line but may land inside the key after the ball is released. Coaches must introduce some basic offensive plays and inbound plays. Coaches should also begin to identify player positions on the court, but the focus should be on understanding all positions.
- **3rd & 4th Defense**: **MAN TO MAN ONLY for 3rd&4th.** Defense must let the offense bring the ball up to half court before engaging (1/2 court press allowed). **FULL COURT PRESSING** will be allowed in the **final 1 minute of the second and fourth quarters** (**must be man to man)**. A **team will also be allowed to full court press (man to man) at ANY point in the game if they are down by 10 or more points**. If a team is **ahead by 10 or more** points they **cannot press or steal**, even in the last 1 minute of 2nd and 4th quarters.

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- Once the ball is in the key a second or third defender in help defense is allowed to assist in stopping the ball, whether that be double-teaming or trapping. Otherwise, **no double-teaming or trapping is allowed outside of the key, that is NOT MAN TO MAN**. Double teaming or trap violations outside of the key will result in stoppage of play and offensive inbound. A defensive player in help defense may impede an offensive drive but must recover to his own defender, no double teaming outside of the key. Defensive switching is permitted.
- **5th&6th Defense:** Teams can use a **man to man OR zone defense**. They can press for the entirety of game unless the point differential reaches 10 points or more: At that point, they can no longer **PRESS OR STEAL** until point differential falls back under 10 points.
- **Fouls**: Fouls will be called by the referee and should be made with discretion. **Players CANNOT foul out. Coaches, please make sure players do not abuse this privilege. If they continually commit consecutive or egregious blatant fouls, we ask that the coach sits them out, OR THE OFFICIAL can sit a player down if they continue to blatantly or aggressively foul**. **Shooting fouls** will result in two or three shots dependent upon where the shot was taken from (inside or outside 3 point arc). Players may enter the key on free throws at the shooters release of ball, however shooter may not enter lane until ball hits rim. A lane violation for the offensive team will result in a turnover and a lane violation for the defensive team will result in an additional free throw. Technical fouls will be assessed for i.e. fighting, foul language, aggressive behaviors, and any other unsportsmanlike conducts. If a technical foul is called the opposing team will be awarded 2 foul shots AND possession of the ball. In the last 1

MINUTE of EACH HALF, ALL fouls, EXCEPT SHOOTING & TECHNICAL fouls , will result in a 1 and 1 foul shot.

- **Out of bounds**: All plays out of bounds are to be called. On the sidelines players will pass the ball in from the sideline. Underneath the basket will be an inbound from the baseline.
- **Mercy Rule**: If the scoring margin between the teams exceeds 24 points the scoreboard points will be zeroed out and the 24 pt differential score recorded as the FINAL score. The game will continue with normal timing and scoring rules. The scoreboard operators will continue to add points as scored from the new " 0 to 0" starting point even though game has already been decided.
- **4 minute pre-game warm**. **Half time** will consist of **3 minutes**.
- Games will be played in quarters. **3rd&4th will play 4 quarters at 7 minutes each**
- **5th&6th will play 4 quarters at 9 Minutes each**

- **A running game clock** will be used until last 1 minute of second and fourth quarter. **With running clock;** game **clock will stop for timeouts and during ALL FOUL shots**. **During foul shots** clock will resume after ball is live after missed shot or inbounded after made foul shot. **Regulation timing** will be used in the **FINAL 1 MINUTE** of the second and fourth quarters and during overtime. **Regulation timing** will be utilized for out of bounds, free throws, fouls, jump balls, time outs and ALL MADE shots (clock stops until inbounded) during final minute of 2nd/4th quarter & overtime period. **So ALL dead balls will result in stopped clock during regulation timing**.

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- **Overtime period** if required will be 2 minutes. As above mentioned, **regulation timing** will be used for all overtime periods. Each team will receive and additional timeout if overtime is required. **Pressing** rules, for 3rd & 4th Grade games, apply for overtime period as they did for 4th quarter. If there is still a tie game after overtime a free throw contest will determine the outcome. Five kids from each team (coaches pick) will shoot one free throw each. Best percentage wins.
- Tennis shoes are required. Absolutely no boots, cleats, Crocs, or sandals will be allowed for play. It is strongly recommended that gym shoes be brought into the guy and put on prior to the game.
- Concussion protocol to be followed. "When in Doubt Sit Them Out" policy shall be enforced.
- No watches, earrings, necklaces, plastic hair clips, beads, or other jewelry may be worn during the game. No jeans may be worn. ***ALL RULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE**