TRI-COUNTY

YOUTH BASKETBALL RULES

Revised January 2026

YOUTH BASKETBALL RULES

Teams will play according to the current edition of the National Federation of State High Schools with the following exceptions:

LEAGUE ADMINISTRATIVE RULES:

1. MANDATORY SUBSTITUTION RULES:

All eligible players in uniforms must enter the game and play the amount of time stated in the following rules:
During the first three quarters of play, the mandatory substitution rule shall be in effect. For the first 3 quarters of play, substitutions can only be made at the midway break of each quarter and at the quarter break. During the 4th quarter, coaches can sub at any time throughout the quarter, however, **every player** must play **2 consecutive minutes** of play (if this is not followed, a technical foul will be called and the other team will receive 2 free throws and possession of the ball).

Ten minutes before the start of the game, a line-up card will be filled out with all players in the order in which the coach wants them to play. A copy must be kept on the score table, at all times. Each player shall receive a number to indicate the order in which they will enter the game.

EXAMPLE "A"

1. Wilson	7. Jones
2. Smith	8. Johnson
3. Downs	9. Alle
4. Craig	10. Jenkins
5. Worth	11. Layton
6. Dodds	12. Kelly

Example A starts the first quarter with players 1,2,3,4, & 5 at the midway break of the first quarter, players 6 through 10 will enter. At the start of the 2nd quarter, players 11, 12, 1, 2 & 3 will be playing; at the midway break of the 2nd quarter, players 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8 will enter the game.

EXAMPLE "B"

1. Barry	5. Smith
2. Jones	6. Shields
3. Moore	7. Neal

4. Kelly

Example B starts the first quarter with players 1 through 5; at the midway break, players 6, 7, 1, 2 & 3 will enter. At the start of the 2nd quarter, players 4, 5, 6, 7 & 1 will be playing; at the midway break of the 2nd quarter, players 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6 will be in the game. At the start of the 2nd half, players 7, 1, 2, 3 & 4 will be playing; at the midway break, players 5, 6, 7, 1 & 2 will enter.

Games will not begin until a line up has been submitted to the score table and officials. If this is not done 10 minutes prior to game, the team will receive a technical foul to start the game.

MANDATORY SUBSTITUTION RULES (continued)

In the event of an injury, the next player on the line-up card scheduled to enter the game will replace the injured player. That player will remain in the game until either the injured player is ready to return to the game, or until the next scheduled substitution time occurs. If the player is unable to return to the game, the substitution schedule will be adjusted by skipping over the number of the replaced player whenever it occurs during substitutions. If a player must come out of the game for any reason the next player in the rotation takes his/her place, once replaced, the same player may return and the player who went in comes back out.

If a player gets three fouls before the first half is over, the player may be substituted for by the next player in the substitution line-up. The player with three fouls can be held out of the game for the remainder of the first half. If the player is scheduled to re-enter the game during the first half by substitution line-up, the player does not have to re-enter the game in which case the substitution rotation will be adjusted by skipping over that number whenever it occurs. At the start of the 2nd half the substitution line-up card will be in effect, picking up where it left off at the end of the first half.

2. **LEAGUE GAMES SHALL BE PLAYED AS SCHEDULED**, unless weather conditions force cancellations.

3. If a player is being disciplined or is sick and will not be fulfilling the playing requirements, it shall be reported to your basketball director, who will notify the city's basketball director and the opposing coach before the game.

4. **There will be one minute allowed for match-ups at the quarter breaks and half-time**. At substitution breaks (the midway point of the first three quarters) there will be an official time-out followed by match-ups. Coaches are reminded that a substitution break is NOT A TIMEOUT and players should remain on the court ready to play. In the event a coach delays the start of the game following a substitution break the team will be charged a timeout.

5. Coaches of the teams playing the last game of the day need to stay after the game and help with gym clean up. (Coaches are encouraged to have team parents help.)

6. Games cancelled due to weather will be rescheduled when possible.

7. Line-up sheets will be prepared prior to the beginning of the game.

8. Quarters will be twelve (12) minutes with one (1) minute between.

BACK COURT DEFENSE (3rd & 4th grades only)

1. When bringing the ball up the court, the team on defense can't guard the player with the ball until the ball crosses the volleyball court 10 ft line (10 feet past the center line.) **NO BACKCOURT GUARDING**

**The volleyball 10 ft line needs to be shown to coaches by referees prior to start of game). If the court doesn't have a volleyball line, gym supervisors need to use tape and tape it.

2. Any ball being passed from backcourt to frontcourt may not be intercepted until the ball crosses the center line.

3. If the back-court guarding rules are violated, each team shall be given one warning per half to be followed by a technical foul on each occurrence thereafter.

4. The player with the ball needs to cross half court in the proper amount of time, the offensive team has 10 seconds to get the ball across half court. If they fail to do so, the 10 second violation will be called.

If a team is delaying time and not starting a play, the ref will "coach" to play and the coach will get told that the play needs to start. If the team continues to hold the ball and not start a play, the ref will call the 5 second violation for holding the ball and the ball will be awarded to the other team.

The goal of ¾ grade is to teach the kids the game, so we will start by "coaching" the player what to do. However, if this continues to be violated during the game coaching from the ref will stop and the violation will be called right away.

5. The normal rule of 5 second violations will be called—
This occurs when an offensive player holding the ball is closely guarded (within 3ft) for **five seconds** without passing, dribbling, or shooting. The count resets if the defender is no longer within the required distance.

1. No defensive player may enter the back court or break the vertical plane of the half court line with any part of their body. Each team shall be given a warning in each half to be followed by a technical foul on each occurrence thereafter.

2. A defense may not double team the ball outside the 3-point line.

3. Defense may not double team a player without the ball. **Do not confuse this with "help defense". Playing "help defense" is NOT the same as a double team.

BACKCOURT DEFENSE (5th & 6th grades only)

1. The use of a full court press is illegal for 3rd & 4th grade but is legal for 5th & 6th grade up to a 10-point lead. No zone presses are allowed. Teams may double team the ball in back court. After a 10-point lead is established, the following rule will apply until the lead is under 10 points: When the defensive team gains possession of the ball the opposing team must drop back to the half court line. Each team shall be given a warning in each half to be followed by a technical foul on each occurrence thereafter.

2. Man-to-man defense must be played at all times. Teams are allowed to use "help defense", but zone defense is not allowed.

3. Trapping or double teaming the ball is not considered a zone, provided the rest of the defense is guarding one man and not guarding an area. A player without the ball may not be double teamed. (Example: on an inbounds play).

ZONE DEFENSE

1. Zone defense is illegal. No defensive player may **intentionally** guard an area instead of an opponent.

2. Basic defensive variations such as switching, sliding through, dropping off on the weak side and double teaming of the ball are legal. A player without the ball may not be double teamed.

3. Teams detected to be in violation of the zone defense rule after one warning shall be charged a technical foul (opponent awarded 2 free throws and the ball at midcourt).

4. Defensive player must be within 6 feet of offensive player.

FOULS

1. Per new regulation rules as of 2024, each team is allowed 5 team fouls per quarter. Once a team has 5 team fouls, the other team will shoot 2 free throws. The shooter is the offensive player who was fouled.

2. The team fouls reset each quarter. (this is simply a change to the way teams get into "Bonus". The previous rule of shooting 1 free throw after 7 team fouls in a half, then 2 free throws after 10 team fouls in a half is no longer in effect).

GAME ADMINISTRATION

1. The home team shall provide a qualified timekeeper.

2. Both teams shall provide a qualified scorekeeper. The home team's scorekeeper is the official scorebook for the game.

3. Scorekeepers from each team shall have the additional responsibility of comparing the opposing team's personnel to the rotation card and notifying the officials of any discrepancy as soon as possible. This comparison shall be performed before the start of a quarter and during the substitution break of quarters 1, 2, 3 and 4. The comparison shall also be performed when a player is substituted in the middle of play (injury / illness as described in the "Mandatory Substitution Rules" section above) in quarters 1, 2, 3 and 4.

4. All players must wear gym or tennis shoes with non-marking soles.

5. 3rd & 4th grade boys and 5th & 6th grade boys and girls: Official ball size is the 28.5 intermediate (NCAA Women's Ball). 3rd & 4th grade girls: Official ball size is 27.5 junior.

6. (3rd & 4th grade only) The score will be turned off when a difference of 18 points is reached. This rule shall take effect at the beginning of the 3rd quarter. The clock is operated as usual. Once the score is turned off, it will remain off for the duration of the game.

GAME TIMING

1. Games shall consist of four quarters. Quarters shall be twelve (12) minutes with one (1) minute between quarters. The clock will be a running clock only stopping at the 6:00 mark for subs and at the end of each quarter. The game clock may be stopped on an official time out and or a team time out.

2. **Special timing rules for the 4th quarter**

A. In the 4th quarter the clock will be a running clock with the last 1 min being a stop clock only if the score is 6 pt or less in difference.

3. Half-time shall be five (5) minutes long.

4. **Overtime:** Shall consist of a maximum of 2 OT periods. The first period will be 2 min. long. If necessary, the second period will be 1 min. long. The clock will be a running clock except for the last min. of the 1st OT period and the 2nd OT Period. There will be no additional OT periods, and games can end in a tie.

5. Each team is allowed 4 time outs for the game and one additional time out for the entire overtime session. Time outs will be one minute. Time outs may NOT be called consecutively (there must be at least one second off the game clock before calling another time out).

6. Special timeout rules for (3rd & 4th grade)

(a) When the ball is inbounded in the back court, a team has only 10 seconds to bring the ball across the half court line. If the team calls a time out BEFORE crossing the half court line they only have the remaining amount of the ORIGINAL 10 seconds to advance the ball across the half court line. (Timeouts shall not be used for prolonged stalling in the back court).

GAME OFFENSE

1. For 3rd/4th grade the free throw line shall be 12' from the basket. Players will line up below the block.

2. For 5th/6th grade the free throw line shall be 15’ from the basket. Players will line up above the block.

3. Three second violations shall be enforced from the 15-foot line.

4. Offensive patterns designed to isolate a player one-on-one against an opponent are illegal. (An isolation offensive play pits an offensive player one on one versus a defensive player driving to the basket. A "clear out" play that enables this is illegal.) Teammates must be involved in the offense. A technical foul may be awarded at the official's discretion.

5. 3rd & 4th boys and girls will use the 8.5-foot basket, and 5th and 6th grade boys and girls will use regulation 10-foot height.

6. The 3-point rule will not apply to shots made from beyond the 3-point line for 3rd & 4th grade.

7. Once a team has gained possession of the basketball, a basketball move needs to be made before the defense has to clear the backcourt.