

YOUTH BASKETBALL GUIDELINES: Grades:3-5



The below playing standards and rules are to serve as guidelines and recommendations for those administering basketball competitions. We understand that organizations and facilities may not always be able to accommodate some of the recommendations. In that case, we suggest that modifications are allowed where limitations exist (i.e. inability to raise or lower the height of a basket, re-drawing court lines, or not having a shot clock).

EQUIPMENT & COURT SPECIFICATIONS

TOPIC	RECOMMENDATION
Size of Ball	Boys and Girls size 6 (28.5")
Height of Basket	10'
Size of Court	74'x50'
Distance of 3-Point Arc	Not Applicable
Distance of Free Throw Line	14'

NOTE: 3-on-3 half-court play is also recommended for young players to foster enhanced participation and development.

GAME STRUCTURE

TOPIC	RECOMMENDATION
Game Length	Two 20 minute periods- Running clock. Except last 2 minutes of each period.
Time Between Periods	2 minutes
Extra Period(s)	2 minutes
Scoring	Free throw: 1 point, all field goals: 2 points, 3-point field goals: N/A
Timeouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Two 60-second timeouts permitted for each half of play. ▶ One 60-second timeout granted for each extra period ▶ Unused timeouts may not carry over to the next half or into extra periods
Start of Game Possession	Coin flip. Team awarded possession starts with throw-in at half court

GAME TACTICS

TOPIC	RECOMMENDATION
Playing Time	Equal playing time. Coaches discretion in the last 2 minutes of each period and extra periods
Set Defense	Only player-to-player defense throughout the competition, except last two minutes of period
Pressing Defense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Player-to-player defense may be extended full court in the last 2 minutes of each period ▶ Leading team may not extend the defense over half court if leading by 12 points or more
Double-Team/Crowding	Double-team/crowding is not allowed until the last 2 minutes of each period
Stealing From the Dribbler	Coaches discretion throughout the game

HIGHLIGHTED GAME PLAY RULES

TOPIC	RECOMMENDATION
Backcourt Timeline	10 seconds
Shot Clock	Not applicable
5 Seconds Closely Guarded	Only when offensive the player is holding the basketball
Clock Stoppage	Last 2 minutes of each period
Length of Time for a Free-Throw	10 seconds
Number of Players Permitted on Free-Throw Lane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Offense may have 3 players on the lane, including the shooter ▶ Defense may have 3 players on the lane
Substitutions	Either team may substitute when the clock is stopped
Advancement of Ball after a Timeout	Not applicable



DEFINITIONS

Player-to-Player Defense

- ▶ Each player is responsible for guarding and moving with one offensive player. This requires the defensive player to move according to the offensive player's movements with or without the ball - Optional by coach
- ▶ The defensive player must stay on the same side of the court as the offensive player, divided by the half court line.
- ▶ If an offensive player with the ball advances past their defensive player, another defender.

may rotate to guard that offensive player.

Pressing Defense: Defensive guarding, either on or off the ball, within the backcourt.

Double-Team/Crowding: Two or more defensive players guarding a single offensive player. Except in the last 2 minutes of each period and extra period.

RATIONALE

Distance of 3-Point Arc: For Grades 3-5 year-olds, although the 3-point arc may exist on the floor, all baskets made beyond this arc only count as 2 points. (Unless games are played on regular sized court)

Distance of Free Throw Line: Grades 3-5 should take free throws 14 feet from the basket to develop proper form and increase success.

Height of Basket: A 10' basket height for Grades 3-5 will be used.

Scoring: All field goals for Grades 3-5 are worth two points to encourage children to shoot within a developmentally-appropriate range. This allows for proper mechanics and form. While these age segments may attempt a shot behind the 3-point arc, any field goal made behind the arc will count as 2 points.

Size of Ball: A smaller basketball for the younger age segments is advised due to the size of a child's hand as well as their developing skill level. A smaller ball allows for better control and success.

Size of Court: For Grades 3-5, a 74'x 50' court is more appropriate for younger children based on their relative size in space.



Start of Game Possession: For Grades 3-5, a coin flip will determine the team that will start with the ball to mitigate significant differences in height and coordination among children. Alternating possession rules will then ensue throughout the game.

Timeouts: Managing the way timeouts are called allows for better game flow and decision-making by the player(s). Two timeouts per half. One timeout in overtime. Timeouts do not carry over to any period or overtime.

Double-Team/Crowding: Crowding the ball with multiple players (referred to as “double-teaming”) is not allowed for Grades 3-5 due to skill and size discrepancies among children at these ages. Exception: Last 2 minutes of each period.

Playing Time: To ensure that all young children participating in the sport have an opportunity to experience the game, equal and fair playing time is recommended for both periods and will be at the coaches discretion in the last 2 minutes and each period and in extra period. Equal and fair playing time is encouraged throughout all other time segments.

Pressing Defense: For Grades 3-5, permitting player-to-player defense to extend full-court in the last 2 minutes and extra periods only allows players to become accustomed to full-court defense while not having to understand sophisticated zone presses. It also allows for an introduction to competitive tactics.

Set Defense: The player-to-player requirement for Grades 3-5 encourages physical activity and movement, and promotes the development of individual skill related to guarding a player both on and off the ball.

Clock Stoppage: Fewer clock stoppages for Grades 3-5 allows for a better game flow. It will be a running clock. The clock will only stop in the last 2 minutes of each period.