

YOUTH BASKETBALL GUIDELINES: GRADES 1-2



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	Youth 27"
Height of Basket	9'
Size of Court	50' x 42'
Distance of 3-Point Defensive Box	This serves as the "Defensive Box"
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 for the last 2 minutes
Time Between Periods	2 minutes
Overtime	2 minutes
Scoring	Free throw: 1 point, all field goals: 2 points, no 3-point field goals
Timeouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Two 60-second timeouts permitted in 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
Set Defense	Only player-to-player defense throughout the competition, except last one minute of period
Pressing Defense	Pressing is not allowed until the last minute of each period
Double-Team/Crowding	Double-team/crowding not allowed in the competition(except the last minute of each half)
Stealing From the Dribbler	Stealing from a dribbler not allowed in the competition(except the last minute of each half)

HIGHLIGHTED GAME PLAY RULES

TOPIC	RECOMMENDATION
Backcourt Timeline	Not applicable
Shot Clock	Not applicable
5 Seconds Closely Guarded	Not applicable
Clock Stoppage	Running clock until the last 1 minute of period on every dead ball
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 on any stoppage of play
Advancement of Ball after a Timeout	Not applicable
Defensive Box	All defense must stay in the defensive area (3point line) until the last minute of each period



DEFINITIONS

Player-to-Player Defense

- Zone or man defense is at the discretion of each coach.
- The defensive player must stay on the same side of the court as the offensive player. All defense must remain in the defense box until the last minute of each period
- If an offensive player with the ball advances past their defensive player, another defender may rotate to guard that offensive player.
- Going outside the defensive box more than two times will result in 2 warnings then a free throw will be added to the other team.

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

Double-Team/Crowding: Two or more defensive players guarding a single offensive player. The last 1 minute, defense may go all the way to half court to play defense. A team has 10 seconds to cross the half court line.

RATIONALE

Distance of 3-Point Arc: For Grades K-2, although the 3-point arc may exist on the floor, all baskets made beyond this arc only count as two points. Therefore, the distance of the line is not applicable for these age segments. Eliminating the 3-point basket will encourage players to shoot from within a developmentally-appropriate range. The 3 pt arc will be used as the defense box stated earlier.

Distance of Free Throw Line: Grades K-2 should take free throws 14 feet from the basket to develop proper form and increase success.

Height of Basket: 9ft. Utilizing a lower basket height for 7-8 year-olds allows children to develop proper shooting form and increases the opportunity for shooting success.

Scoring: All field goals for Grades 1-2 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 only count as two 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 1-2, a 50'x 42' court is contemplated to be a cross-court game on a full-sized basketball court. This dimension is more appropriate for younger children based on their relative size in space.



Start of Game Possession: For Grades 1-2, 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 60 second timeouts are permitted in each half

Double-Team/Crowding: Crowding the ball with multiple players (referred to as “double-teaming”) is not allowed for Grades K-2 due to skill and size discrepancies among children at these ages. (Exception: The last minute 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 Grades K-2. Equal and fair playing time is encouraged throughout all segments.

Pressing Defense: Pressing defense is prohibited until the last minute of each period to help children develop principles of movement with and without the ball in a half-court setting.

Stealing from the Dribbler: Grades 1-2 players are not allowed to steal the ball except for the last minute of each period from an active dribbler. This allows ball-handlers to develop dribbling skills and confidence with the basketball.

Backcourt Timeline: 10 second timeline violation for Grades 1-2 allows coaches to communicate to players before they reach half court. This assists coaches in teaching children, particularly for those first learning the game.

Clock Stoppage: Fewer clock stoppages for Grades 1-2 allows for a better game flow. Clock will only stop during the last 2 minutes of each period.

Advancement of the Ball after a Timeout: For Grades 1-2, the focus is on development over strategy. Therefore, there is no pressing defense at this level, and the ball will not automatically advance after a timeout.

Substitutes: Players must be substituted 2 times each period. The clock will stop briefly around the 10 minute mark of each period to allow substitutions. This will help ensure that players get to substitute 2 times a period.

Traveling: Traveling will only occur when the following happens:

Running without dribbling

Stop dribbling, dribbling again, stop dribbling, and dribbling one more time Take more than 3 steps without passing or shooting

Passing: The ball must be passed 3 times before a shot can be taken. (3 passes are not required for any shot in the last 2 minutes of each period)