



YOUTH BASKETBALL

GENERAL GUIDELINES AND RULEBOOK 1st – 8th Grade

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**HIGHLANDS RANCH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
2026-2027 Youth Basketball Program**

GENERAL GUIDELINES

I. HRCA Youth Sports Philosophy and Mission

All sports programs offered by Highlands Ranch Community Association Sports Department are based on fun and participation. We realize there is a competitive situation when two teams are playing each other, BUT winning is not our primary goal. Our mission is to develop positive sportsmanship skills, and athletic ability while learning life lessons for all participants of all ages and skill level in a positive, safe, and fun environment. Participants, coaches, parents, spectators, and staff all play an important role in meeting this mission.

II. Waivers

Youth Sports Waivers must be completed and signed by the participants on the team at the time of registration. This waiver is attached to all registration forms, available in all recreation centers and may be downloaded at www.hrcaonline.org.

III. Player Eligibility

Each player must play with a team of like grade/age/gender unless otherwise approved by the HRCA Sports Department. All players must have played in at least one game and be listed on the official team roster to be eligible for the end of season tournament.

IV. Coach Eligibility

Coaches must complete and sign a volunteer application giving HRCA approval to complete a background check. A coach may be denied his/her rights to be a coach based on the CBI Background Check report.

V. Sportsmanship Policy

Good sportsmanship and proper conduct are expected by all participants, parents, and visitors at all times. As a coach in our program, you are expected to do your part by setting a good example of sportsmanship. You are your team's leader, and you are responsible for your own behavior as well as your parents and players' behavior.

What is Good Sportsmanship?

- **Congratulating your opponent after the game win, lose or tie.**
- **Checking up on an injured opponent.**
- **Thanking the referees for officiating after the game has completed.**
- **Having the courage, and diplomacy, to let an irate parent know that they're beginning to lose their perspective on the game.**
- **Knowing that running up the score against your opponent doesn't accomplish anything of a positive nature.**
- **Understanding that when the game is over, it's time to shake hands, smile, and move on.**
- **Knowing when your jubilation and celebration on the court is getting out of hand and is beginning to embarrass your opponent.**
- **Treat your opponent in the same manner that you'd like to be treated. Keep that one simple rule in mind, and you'll be looked upon as a coach who understands and honors the rules of sportsmanship.**

Zero Tolerance Statement: HRCA has a zero-tolerance policy for coach, player and spectator misconduct. All coaches, players, and spectators are expected to support league staff and officials by demonstrating good sportsmanship at all times. Positive communication is expected from all spectators

and coaches. Verbal and physical abuse will not be tolerated. Any infractions of this policy may be grounds for a determined suspension period or expulsion from future HRCA league participation. Any actions or behavior that results in a violation of the Code of Conduct policy may result in an immediate suspension from any active program or leagues you are playing in with no refund and any future HRCA program or league within one year from the date of your suspension.

VI. Disciplinary Action

Coaches, spectators and players are all subject to the following disciplinary actions if they fail to maintain proper conduct in our leagues. The HRCA Sports Department reserves the right to issue any final disciplinary actions for any of the following violations at the Sports Department's discretion.

TECHNICAL FOULS:

1. If a coach, spectator or player receives one (1) technical foul during any game, the opposing team is awarded an automatic two (2) points (no free throws awarded) and possession of the ball at half court. Examples of a technical foul include but are not limited to:
 - i. Disrespectfully addressing an official.
 - ii. Attempting to influence an official's decision.
 - iii. Using profane or inappropriate language or obscene gestures.
 - iv. Disrespectfully addressing, baiting, or taunting an opponent.
 - v. Objecting to an official's decision by rising from the bench or using gestures.
 - vi. Inciting undesirable crowd reactions.
2. If a coach, spectator, or player receives two (2) technical fouls in the same game they will be ejected from the game and may be asked to leave the facility. If a league approved assistant coach is not available to coach the remainder of the game, it will be considered a forfeit for the offending team.
3. If coaches, spectators, or players from the same team receive a total of three (3) technical fouls during any one game, that team automatically forfeits the game, and the opposing team is awarded a win for that game.

FLAGRANT FOULS: A foul that may be of a violent or savage nature, or a technical non-contact foul which displays unacceptable conduct.

4. COACHES, SPECTATORS & PLAYERS

- i. If a coach, spectator, or player receives a flagrant foul they will be ejected from the game and may be asked to leave the facility. They may be suspended for a minimum of the next one (1) scheduled league games or longer depending on the severity of the incident. If a head coach is ejected and a league approved assistant coach is not available to coach the remainder of the game, it will be considered a forfeit for the offending team.

Abuse of Facility / League Staff

5. COACHES, SPECTATORS & PLAYERS

- i. If a coach, spectator, or player commits any of the following acts they will be ejected from the game and facility. If a head coach is ejected and a league approved assistant coach is not available to coach the remainder of the game, it will be considered a forfeit for the offending team.
 1. Disrespectfully addressing a league or facility staff person.
 2. Using profane or inappropriate language or obscene gestures to a league or facility staff person.
 3. Physically touching, pushing, or hitting a league or facility staff person.
6. If a coach, spectator, or player receives an ejection during the season, suspension length and/or disciplinary action will be determined by HRCA Sports Department after full review of the incident. Coaches, spectator, or player may be ejected from facility use as well.

Suspension or Early Termination of Games

7. The game officials and/or HRCA league staff will have the authority to terminate prematurely any game when they feel in their discretion that it is in the interest of safety to do so. Score at the time of the termination will be the final score, unless the leading team is primarily responsible for the termination, in which case the leading team shall lose by forfeit.
8. In addition to the penalties and suspensions assessed under the above rules, the League Authorities may, at their discretion, investigate any incident that occurs in connection with any game and may assess additional suspensions for any offense committed before, during or after any game by a player or team official, whether or not such offense had been penalized by the referee.

VII. Coach, Spectator & Player Conduct

1. Coaches are responsible to see that their team's players and parents understand the rules and expected parent and player conduct.
 - i. It is the coach's responsibility to control their players **and** spectators before, during and after games. No coach or parent is allowed on the court during play. Teams may be penalized with a technical foul for violation.
 - ii. Only one coach may stand during the game and **MUST** remain in the team bench area. Additional coach and players **MUST** remain seated during play.
 1. Should a coach receive a technical foul, both coaches (head coach and assistant) must sit for the remainder of the game.
 - iii. **Only the head coach may address the game officials during play. Assistant coaches, players and spectators may not address the game officials before, during, or after play.**
 - iv. Failure to calm and remove an ejected coach, spectator or player from the facility will cause the forfeiture of the game without prior warning. The Sports Department will not review protests involving this or any other type of forfeit situation.
 - v. Coaches are responsible for the enforcement of ejected player's suspensions. Suspended coaches and spectators are not allowed to watch games for the duration of their suspension. Coaches and spectators who violate this rule may be suspended for an unspecified duration.
 - vi. Coaches are responsible to see that their team's players and spectators understand the rules and expected parents and player conduct.
 - vii. Coaches, spectators, and players are expected to support league officials and understand that officiating is not an easy task. Officials are guaranteed to make errors just as everyone else does during a game.
 - viii. Coaches, spectators, and players are expected to follow the facility guidelines. No food or drink is permitted in the gymnasiums. Players may **ONLY** have closed capped drinks.
 - ix. Coaches must ensure that no child is ever alone with an adult, with the exception of biological children and their guardians.

VIII. Uniform Statement

The HRCA Sports Department requires participants to wear the approved league jersey.

IX. School Facilities Guidelines

1. **No eating or drinking (besides water) during either games or practices.** This includes both refreshments and snacks for players and spectators. Smoking and alcoholic beverages are strictly prohibited. HRCA may spot check gyms with sports staff. Please respect facilities by remaining in the gym area as much as

possible. Use of hallways for practice is not permitted. Please have a parent supervise restroom use if you are not able to. Failure to comply could result in usage being revoked for the current or future years.

Highlands Ranch Community Association 2026-2027 Youth Basketball

PLAYING RULES

General Notes: National Federation of State High School Association rules for basketball will apply if not revised in the following section. All calls will be made based upon the discretion of the official and may vary from game to game.

I. Game Line-Up Information

1. The home team is listed first on the schedule and will wear white jerseys. The visiting team is listed second on the schedule and will wear navy blue jerseys.
2. Coaches must list all their players in the official scorebook at the scorekeeper table before the game is scheduled to begin.
3. Teams may play with a minimum of 4 (four) players. Teams with less than 4 (four) players available will forfeit that game.
4. Game time is forfeit time. Teams are encouraged to loan players to the other team so that the players will still get a game. Remember, this is officially a forfeit and officials will not officiate the game. The main goal is to see that the players still get to play.
5. If a coach attempts to play a player that is not registered, rostered, or on prior scoresheets—the contest will be a forfeit. Teams may still compete, but the game will not be officiated and recorded as a forfeit.

II. Playing Time Guidelines

1. **All players must receive equal playing time.** If a player is being penalized with game time loss the coach **MUST** contact the players' parents **BEFORE THE GAME DATE**. The official scorekeeper and opposing coach must be contacted on **GAME DATE** before the game begins. Failure to notify the opposing coach and scorekeepers table may result in a forfeiture of that game.
2. Reasons for limiting the playing time of a player include the following:
 - i. No show and no call for missing practices or games.
 - ii. Behavior problems at practices or games.
 - iii. The player is sick, injured or coming off an injury.

III. Game Equipment / Player Equipment

1. Basketball Size
 - i. 1st – 3rd grade girls & boy's teams – Junior size ball (27.5)
 - ii. 4th – 8th grade girls & 4th grade boy's teams – Intermediate size ball (28.5)
 - iii. 5th – 8th grade boy's teams – Regulation size ball (29.5)
2. Basket Height
 - i. 1st & 2nd grade teams – Eight (8) feet
 - ii. 3rd grade teams – Nine (9) feet
 - iii. 4th – 8th grade teams – Ten (10) feet

IV. Players Equipment, Apparel

1. The referee shall not permit any team member to wear equipment or apparel which in his/her judgment is dangerous or confusing to other players or is not appropriate. Examples of illegal items include, but are not limited to:

- i. A guard, cast or brace made of hard and unyielding leather, plaster, soft plastic, metal or any other hard substance. Knee and ankle braces are permitted but all exposed hinges must be covered.
- ii. Headbands no wider than 2 inches and made of nonabrasive, unadorned, elastic, fiber, soft leather or rubber may be worn. Rubber/cloth (elastic) bands may be used to control hair.
- iii. **Jewelry shall not be worn. Religious and medical-alert medals are not considered jewelry. A religious medal must be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical-alert medal must be taped and may be visible.**
 - 1. *Note: Earrings MAY be worn and must be taped to the ears.*

V. Scoretable Responsibilities

- 1. Each team must provide an adult (18+) volunteer to fulfill the duties of the scorekeeper and/or official timekeeper. The table is equipped with an official scorebook which must be used for this purpose.
 - i. 1st & 2nd grade teams – There will not be scorekeeping for this age. Emphasis should be on skill development, not wins and losses.
 - ii. 3rd – 8th grade teams – Keep track of fouls and official book score.

VI. Start of Play and Game Length

- 1. **1st & 2nd Grade Games only**
 - i. Games will consist of two twenty-minute halves. Halftime will be two minutes.
 - ii. The home team will start with the ball. Alternating possession will be used for all other jump balls and possession after each quarter.
 - iii. Game warm-up times (3 minutes) begin at the scheduled start time of game. Games must begin after the warm-up period. Please do not show up at your assigned facility earlier than 10 minutes before scheduled game start time if you are the first game of the day. Game time (after allotted warm-up time) is forfeit time; no grace period will be allowed.
 - iv. Three (3) 60-second timeouts will be assigned to each team during regulation play.
 - v. Game clock will always run except during team and officials' timeouts.
 - vi. A game may be shortened or terminated by an HRCA employee representative in cases of unsportsmanlike conduct.
- 2. **3rd – 8th Grade Games Only**
 - i. Games will consist of two twenty-minute halves. Halftime will be three minutes.
 - ii. A "Mercy Rule" will be in effect. If a team is winning by a 30-point margin or more, the game will be declared a win for the team in the lead. The game will continue to be played and the score will be turned off; the clock will then become a running clock and only stop on team or officials' timeouts for the remainder of the game time. No pressing is allowed after the Mercy Rule has been enforced. Coaches are strongly encouraged to split their teams up and continue the game but are not required to do so.
 - iii. Games will begin with a jump ball. Alternating possession will be used for all other jump balls and possession after the first half.
 - iv. Three (3) 60-second timeouts will be assigned to each team during regulation play.
 - v. Overtime Period: (Regular Season Games Only): 1 (one) overtime period only will ensue if a regular season game is tied at the end of regulation. The overtime will be 4 minutes in length. The clock will stop on every whistle in the final 1 (one) minute if the score is within 10 points. Timeouts from regulation play will not carry over. Foul count will carry over through all overtime periods. Teams will receive 1 (one)

60-second timeout during the overtime period. If the score remains tied after the overtime period, the game will result in a tie.

- vi. Overtime Period: (Tournament Games only): 1st & 2nd (if necessary) overtime periods are 4 minutes. The clock will stop on every whistle in the final 1 (one) minute if the score is within 10 points. If a third overtime period is needed it will be only 2 minutes. Timeouts from regulation play will not carry over. Teams will receive 1 (one) 60-second timeout per overtime period which cannot be carried over.
- vii. Game warm-up times (3 minutes) begin at the scheduled start time of game. Games must begin after the warm-up period. Please do not show up at your assigned game site earlier than 10 minutes before scheduled game start time if you are the first game of the day. Game time (after allotted warm-up time) is forfeit time; no grace period will be allowed.
- viii. Game clock will always run except during team and officials' timeouts, or the last 2 (two) minutes of the second half if the game is within 10 points or less.
- ix. A game may be shortened or terminated by an HRCA employee representative in cases of unsportsmanlike conduct.

VII. Substitutions

1. 1st & 2nd Grade.
 - i. The game will stop every 5 minutes in each quarter for substitutions.
 - ii. Players may be substituted during a dead ball or timeout for an injury.
2. 3rd – 8th Grade.
 - i. Players must check-in at half court.
 - ii. Substitutions may be made at halftime and during a time-out.
 - iii. During multiple free throws personal fouls, substitutions may be made only before the final attempt in the sequence and after the final attempt has been converted.
 - iv. On any other dead ball situation.
 - v. A coach may request a defensive match-up if three or more substitutes for the same team enter during an opportunity to substitute.

VIII. Fouls

1. Each player is allowed five fouls per game.
2. When a technical foul, flagrant foul or intentional foul is committed, the opposing team is awarded an automatic 2 (two) points (no free throws awarded) and possession of the ball at half court.

IX. Free Throws

1. Players may enter the free throw lane when the ball is released. A lane violation will result in another free throw if committed by the defending team. If the offensive team commits the lane violation the made basket is no good or if the basket is missed the defensive team gets possession of the ball.
2. 1st & 2nd Grade – No designated spot, but no closer than half the distance from the backboard to the free throw line.
3. 3rd & 4th Grade – Must start at the 12' line (designated on the court). Violations will not be called for stepping across the line if the release is performed behind the line.
4. 5th – 8th Grade – Must start and complete the act of the free throw at the 15' line.

X. Offensive Regulations

1. Lane Violations
 - i. 1st – 3rd Grade – Five (5) second lane violation. Count resets after each shot.
 - ii. 4th – 8th Grade – Three (3) second violation. Count resets after each shot.
2. In-Bounds Violations
 - i. 1st – 3rd Grade – Ten (10) second in-bounds pass violation.

- ii. 4th – 8th Grade – Five (5) second in-bounds pass violation.
- iii. All Grades – A defending player must give a three (3) foot buffer to the inbound player.
- 3. 3rd – 8th Grade Boys Upper Only: A five (5) second violation when player fails to pass, shoot or dribble while closely guarded.
- 4. Traveling will be called for all grade divisions with the following guidelines:
 - i. 1st & 2nd Grade – very loose and only if a player is carrying the ball down the court while not making any attempt to dribble.
 - ii. 3rd – 8th Grade – referees' discretion according to the guidelines established in the high school federation rulebook.
- 5. Backcourt violation will be called for only the 3rd – 8th grade divisions.

XI. Defensive Regulations

- 1. 1st & 2nd Grade Leagues
 - i. Only man-to-man defense is allowed in the half-court.
 - ii. No double teaming.
 - iii. Teams will be provided colored wristbands so they may locate their opponent more easily.
 - iv. If a player seems “lost” as to who they should be guarding, the official may assist them in finding their opponent or stop the game so all players can find their corresponding color.
 - v. If the offensive player gets past the defensive player, another defensive player may help but must leave once the original defender recovers to avoid the double team.
 - vi. No pressing is allowed at any time.
 - vii. Stealing is only permitted on passes. The defensive player may not steal the ball from a player who is actively attempting to dribble the ball. If the ball is dribbled in an out-of-control manner the opposing team may steal.
- 2. 3rd – 8th Grade Girls Leagues & Boys Recreational Leagues
 - i. Man-to-man defense only. No zone defense.
 - ii. No double-teaming.
 - iii. No form of defensive pressing is allowed at any time. Defense cannot extend past half court. The only exception is in the last one (1) minute of the second half, full court press will be allowed if the score differential is within ten (10) points.
- 3. 3rd – 8th Grade Boys Upper Leagues
 - i. Man-to-man or zone defense is allowed. Double-teaming is allowed.
 - ii. Full/Half court pressing is allowed.
 - 1. When a team is up by a margin of 15 points, full court press will not be allowed. When the margin drops under 15 points, full court press may resume.

XII. Scoring

- 1. 1st & 2nd Grade.
 - i. No score will be kept for these age groups.
- 2. 3rd – 8th Grade (All divisions)
 - i. All shots within the 3-point line will be counted at two points.
 - ii. All free throws will be counted as one point.
 - iii. 3-point goals will be awarded from beyond the 3-point arc.

XIII. Playoff Seeding (Grades 3rd-8th)

1. The regular season will conclude with a single elimination tournament. The tournament will be seeded based on win percentage by each team during the regular season. Tie Breakers will be determined with the following criteria:
 - i. Forfeits
 1. If a team in the tie breaker has forfeited, they will be dropped from the tie.
 2. If both teams have a forfeit, then go to step ii.
 - ii. Head-to-Head competition
 1. If teams are tied the team with the better record in the head to head games between those tied teams will be given the higher seed.
 2. If the tie cannot be broken, the team with the fewest points given up in all games played will be given the higher seed.
 3. If three or more teams are tied, then go to step iii.
 - iii. If three or more teams are tied and they play each other the same amount of time, the teams with the most wins in the head-to-head games between those tied teams will be given the higher seed.
 - iv. If the tie cannot be broken by the previous criteria, the team with the fewest points given up in head-to-head games will be given the higher seed.
 - v. If the tie still cannot be broken by the previous criteria, the team with the fewest points given up in all games played will be given the higher seed.
 1. If three or more teams are tied and they did not play each other the same number of times, then this procedure will be followed:
 - a. Fewest points given up in all games played.
 - b. Point differential: the teams with the highest positive point differential in all games will be given the higher seed. The most points a team can earn in a game for these criteria is 30.
 - vi. Coin Flip
2. Playoff games are not guaranteed and therefore will not be made-up or refunded if cancelled by the Sports Department for any reason.