

# Star Basketball Rules (Winter 2026)

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## Game Timing

- **Start Time:** All games must begin on time to stay on schedule. Game clock will start at the designated time.
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## Game Format

- **Quarters:** Four 8-minute quarters for all age groups.
  - **Breaks:** 1-minute break between quarters.
  - **Clock Rules:** In the 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade division coaches are allowed one 1 minute, 15 seconds time out in the last four minutes of the game, but must be in possession of the ball to call timeout.
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## Substitutions

- Coaches are allowed one substitution per quarter
  - Allowed at the start of the four minute mark of each quarter but not pass the three minute mark of each quarter. Clock will continue to run. **3-4 and up** The referee will blow the whistle coaches must have their subs ready to enter the court and get into position within five seconds the game will resume.
  - \* it is the coaches responsibility to inform the Referee they would like to make a substitution.
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## Wristband Guidelines

- Applied by coach at half-court before tip-off.
  - Can be changed during the game if needed.
  - Used to match players by skill level for balanced competition.
  - Referees may adjust pairings if necessary.
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## Sportsmanship Rule

- If a team leads by **40 points** they will be considered the winner of that game. The remaining of the game will be played out as normal until the clock expires but no more points will be added to the scoreboard.

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## Division Specifications

### Pre K – K

- **Ball:** 25.5 inches
- **Basket:** 6 feet (with extension)
- **Court:** Cross court, baskets face east and west.
- **Rules:**
  - **Scoring Basket Assignment**
  - Teams shall **not** switch baskets at halftime.
  - Each team will shoot at the basket closest to its bench for the duration of the game.
  - This policy is intended to improve communication between coaches and players during live scoring situations.
    - Start the Game with a Jump Ball
  - **Game Start Procedure (Jump Ball)**
  - The game shall begin with a jump ball at center court.
  - All five players from each team must be positioned on the opposite side of half court from the basket they are attempting to score on.
  - Players may stand anywhere on their designated side, provided their entire body remains outside the half-court center circle boundaries.
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- 5 Players allowed on the court
- Wristbands required for man-to-man defense
- No stealing allowed

## 1st – 2nd Grade

- **Ball:** 25.5 inches
- **Basket:** 8 feet
- **Rules:**
  - **. Scoring Basket Assignment**
  - Teams shall **not** switch baskets at halftime.
  - • Each team will shoot at the basket closest to its bench for the duration of the game.
  - • This policy is intended to improve communication between coaches and players during live scoring situations.
- Start the Game with a Jump Ball

### . Game Start Procedure (Jump Ball)

The game shall begin with a jump ball at center court.

- All five players from each team must be positioned on the opposite side of half court from the basket they are attempting to score on.
- Players may stand anywhere on their designated side, provided their entire body remains outside the half-court center circle boundaries.
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- 5 Players allowed on the court
- Wristbands required for man-to-man defense
- No stealing allowed
- **1/2 Grade – Foul and Scoring Policy**

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- If the offensive player is fouled in the two point zone as they are attempting a shot, the offensive team will be awarded two points added to their score, and the defensive team then will take possession of the ball.
- The same ruling applies within the three point zone

## 3rd – 4th Grade

- **Ball:** 27.5 inches
- **Basket:** 9 feet
- **Rules:**
  - **. Scoring Basket Assignment**
  - Teams shall **not** switch baskets at halftime.
  - • Each team will shoot at the basket closest to its bench for the duration of the game.
  - • This policy is intended to improve communication between coaches and players during live scoring situations.
  - - Start the Game with a Jump Ball
  - **Game Start Procedure (Jump Ball)**
  - The game shall begin with a jump ball at center court.
  - • All five players from each team must be positioned on the opposite side of half court from the basket they are attempting to score on.
  - • Players may stand anywhere on their designated side, provided their entire body remains outside the half-court center circle boundaries.
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    - 5 Players allowed on the court
    - NO Wristbands
    - Man-to-Man Defense, Zone Defense and double teaming is allowable.

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- Stealing allowed
- No full-court press
- **Foul and Scoring Policy**
  - **Free Throws (Grades 3–4 and Above)**
  - All free throws shall be administered in accordance with standard NBA free-throw procedures.
  - If fouled in the two point zone. The offensive player will get two shots from the free-throw line if fouled in the three-point zone the offensive player will get three shots from the free-throw line. if fouled on shot attempt from the two point zone or the three-point zone and the ball goes in the hoop which culminates in a score the offensive player gets a AND ONE shot from the free-throw line.
  - • The game clock shall stop during all free-throw attempts.
  - • Following the final free throw:
    - • If the shot is **made**, the clock shall resume when the inbound pass is legally touched by a player on the court.
    - • If the shot is **missed**, the clock shall resume when the ball makes contact with the rim or backboard
  - • An **air ball** on the final free-throw attempt constitutes a violation and shall result in possession awarded to the opposing team via inbound pass.

## 5th – 6th Grade

- **Ball:** Girls – 27.5 | Boys – 28.5 inches
- **Basket:** Girls – 9 ft | Boys – 10 ft
- **Rules:**
  - **. Scoring Basket Assignment**
  - Teams shall **not** switch baskets at halftime.
  - • Each team will shoot at the basket closest to its bench for the duration of the game.
  - • This policy is intended to improve communication between coaches and players during live scoring situations.
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- Start the Game with a Jump Ball
- **Game Start Procedure (Jump Ball)**
- The game shall begin with a jump ball at center court.
- • All five players from each team must be positioned on the opposite side of half court from the basket they are attempting to score on.
- • Players may stand anywhere on their designated side, provided their entire body remains outside the half-court center circle boundaries.
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- 5 Players allowed on the court
- NO Wristbands
- Man-to-Man Defense, Zone Defense and double teaming is allowable.
- Stealing allowed
- No half-court press until final 4 minutes
- **Foul and Scoring Policy**
- **Free Throws (Grades 3–4 and Above)**
- All free throws shall be administered in accordance with standard NBA free-throw procedures.
- If fouled in the two point zone. The offensive player will get two shots from the free-throw line if fouled in the three-point zone the offensive player will get three shots from the free-throw line. if fouled on shot attempt from the two point zone or the three-point zone and the ball goes in the hoop which culminates in a score the offensive player gets a AND ONE shot from the free-throw line.
- • The game clock shall stop during all free-throw attempts.
- • Following the final free throw:
  - • If the shot is **made**, the clock shall resume when the inbound pass is legally touched by a player on the court.
  - • If the shot is **missed**, the clock shall resume when the ball makes contact with the rim or backboard
- • An **air ball** on the final free-throw attempt constitutes a violation and shall result in possession awarded to the opposing team via inbound pass.
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## 7th – 8th Grade

- **Ball:** Girls – 28.5 | Boys – 29.5 inches
- **Basket:** 10 feet
- **Rules:**
  - Start the Game with a Jump Ball
  - 5 Players allowed on the court
  - NO Wristbands
  - Man-to-Man Defense or Zone Defense
  - Stealing allowed
  - No half-court press until final 4 minutes
- **Foul and Scoring Policy**
- **Free Throws (Grades 3–4 and Above)**
- All free throws shall be administered in accordance with standard NBA free-throw procedures.
- If fouled in the two point zone. The offensive player will get two shots from the free-throw line if fouled in the three-point zone the offensive player will get three shots from the free-throw line. if fouled on shot attempt from the two point zone or the three-point zone and the ball goes in the hoop which culminates in a score the offensive player gets a AND ONE shot from the free-throw line.
- • The game clock shall stop during all free-throw attempts.
- • Following the final free throw:
  - If the shot is **made**, the clock shall resume when the inbound pass is legally touched by a player on the court.
  - If the shot is **missed**, the clock shall resume when the ball makes contact with the rim or backboard
- • An **air ball** on the final free-throw attempt constitutes a violation and shall result in possession awarded to the opposing team via inbound pass.
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## **Violations & Penalties**

Referees award the ball to the opposing team for:

- **Double Dribble:** Using both hands and restarting dribble after stopping.
- **Traveling:** Moving without dribbling.
- **Striking the Ball:** Punching or kicking the ball.
- **Backcourt Violation:** Returning the ball to the backcourt after crossing midcourt.
- **3-Second Violation:** Staying too long in the key.
- **5-Second Violation:** Failing to inbound within 5 seconds.

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## **Personal Fouls**

**Definition:** Any illegal physical contact, including holding, hitting, tripping, pushing, or charging.

- **During a Shot:**
  - **Grades 3-4:** The shooter is awarded free throws.
  - **Grades 5-8:** The shooter is awarded free throws.
- **Game Clock Stoppage**
  - The game clock shall stop only under the following circumstances:
  - **1. Free Throws (3-4 and up)**

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- The clock shall resume when a player legally touches the ball in live play, either following a rebound or an inbound pass.
- An air ball on the final free-throw attempt shall result in a violation and possession awarded to the opposing team.
- **2. Equipment or Uniform Malfunction**
- **3. Player Injury**
- **4. Referee Discretion**
- Referees may briefly stop the clock to address a short, coachable moment when necessary to support player understanding or game management.
- Except for the situations outlined above, the game clock shall remain running. The clock shall always restart when a player legally touches the ball in live play.

## Defensive Play Policy

### 1. Permitted Defensive Schemes

The following defensive strategies are permitted at all applicable grade levels:

- Man-to-man defense
- Zone defense
- Double teaming

### 2. Developmental Application (Grades 3–4 and Above)

Beginning with Grades 3–4, advanced defensive concepts, including double teaming, are intentionally allowed to promote player development and game understanding.

Players are expected to:

- Recognize when a double team is applied.
- Identify open teammates and execute appropriate outlet passes.
- Move into visible passing lanes to support the ball handler.

Defensive players are expected to:

- Understand increased coverage responsibilities during a double team.
- Adjust positioning and assignments until the double team is released.

### 3. Developmental Objective

Allowing these defensive schemes supports the progression of basketball IQ by encouraging players to recognize game situations, react appropriately, and understand team-based responsibilities. This approach is intended to build decision-making skills, accountability, and overall team awareness, while preparing athletes for higher levels of competition.

## Officiating Policy: Violations, Penalties, and Game Management

### 1. Purpose

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The purpose of this policy is to establish clear and consistent officiating standards, eliminate ambiguity, and reduce discretionary variability while maintaining appropriate game flow. These standards are intended to support fair play, player development, and uniform enforcement across all games.

## **2. General Enforcement Standards**

Referees will enforce a defined baseline of rules to minimize developmental allowances and subjective interpretation. Violations shall be called consistently for both teams. Equal enforcement constitutes fair play.

Any violation that results in a competitive advantage, advancement of the ball, or a scoring opportunity shall be called immediately.

For violations occurring outside the three-point arc, referees may issue an initial verbal warning. Repeated violations of the same type will result in a whistle and the appropriate penalty.

## **3. Grade-Level Enforcement Guidelines**

### **3.1 Grades 3–4**

Grades 3–4 represent a transitional stage from introductory divisions with relaxed enforcement (e.g., wristbands, frequent allowances for traveling, double dribbling, and up-and-down violations).

- Players will be allowed the first quarter of the game to adjust to stricter enforcement. This does not mean that penalties or violations will not be called.
- Beginning in the second quarter, all rules will be enforced in accordance with this policy.

### **3.2 Grades 5–6**

For Grades 5–6, all rules and penalties outlined in this policy shall be enforced from the opening jump ball.

## **4. Physical Contact**

Normal basketball contact is permitted for both age groups and is considered part of standard gameplay. Excessive or unsafe contact will be penalized.

The determination of whether contact is excessive is at the sole discretion of the referee, based on training, experience, and real-time judgment.

## **5. Referee Authority and Discretion**

All games are officiated by human referees, and human judgment is an inherent and accepted component of sport. Referees serve as the final authority on all calls and are responsible for setting the tone and parameters of the game.

While referees operate within established rules and guidelines, they retain discretion in interpreting live play. This discretion must be applied evenly and impartially to both teams.

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## 6. Coach Responsibilities

Coaches are responsible for:

- Quickly identifying how the game is being officiated.
- Adjusting coaching strategy and player instruction to align with the referee's established standards.
- Ensuring players compete within the parameters set during the game.

Coaches may seek clarification from referees when necessary. However, disputing or challenging calls in an attempt to force a change in decision is not permitted.

Referee decisions are final and will not be altered.

## 7. Game Adaptation

Adapting to the referee's style within the established rules is considered a fundamental part of the game. All participants are expected to respect officiating authority and adjust accordingly to ensure a fair, controlled, and competitive environment.

## Referee and Coaches Responsibilities and Standards

### 1. Professional Standards

All referees are held to high professional standards and are expected to uphold the integrity of the league at all times.

### 2. Rule Knowledge and Enforcement

Referees must have a thorough understanding of all league rules and are responsible for enforcing them consistently and appropriately throughout the game.

### 3. Game Management and Mentorship

In addition to officiating, referees are expected to serve as mentors and ambassadors of the game by modeling professionalism, sportsmanship, and respect.

### 4. Fair and Equal Enforcement

All penalties and violations must be called impartially and applied equally to both teams, without bias or favoritism.

### 5. Conduct and Respect

Referees and Coaches are expected to demonstrate respect toward:

- The facility and its staff
- Fans and spectators
- Players
- EACH OTHER

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Professional communication and demeanor must be maintained at all times.

## **6. Conflict Management**

Referees must prioritize de-escalation in all high-competition or emotionally charged situations. Actions or communication that unnecessarily escalate conflict are not permitted.