

# Basic Rules for Boys Grades 4/5 & Girls Grades 5-8 (Upward Levels 1-3)

***Except where the following rules apply, play is governed by the National Federation of State High School Associations' (NFHS) Rules Book ([www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org))***

***Modifications in red or strikethroughs are Upward Chester County specific***

## **Game Format**

- Referees lead both teams in prayer at center court before every game. This sets the tone and focus for the game.
- A coin flip or other impartial method determines which team receives possession first. In jump ball situations, possessions will alternate. This promotes fairness for both teams while adhering to the NFHS rule for jump ball situations.
- Clock format: Running clock throughout the game, stopping only for pre-determined substitutions at the end of each segment and halftime.
- At the end of each segment, the team that receives the ball next is based upon the direction of the possession arrow. This avoids the offensive team that may have possession in the next segment from stalling at the end of a period.
- All coaches will adhere to the substitution system as detailed on page 26. The substitution system allows for equal playing time for all players. There are no timeouts. This allows more playing time and keeps the games on time.
- Teams switch goals at halftime. This rule is in compliance with NFHS Rules. It also evens any advantage that may occur because of the court.
- Any game ending in a tie should remain in a tie. No overtimes are played so games stay on schedule.
- Standings add unneeded pressure to the game and therefore will not be maintained.

## **Defense**

- Man-to-man defense will be played at all times. Zone defenses are not allowed in Levels 1-3. In a man-to-man defense, players are only guarding the opponent that closely matches their ability and height. This allows for a more competitive system for every player on the court while creating an equal opportunity for each player.
- Defensive players must stay within arm's reach of the player they are guarding. This prevents defenders from sagging or crowding an area of the court to gain a defensive advantage.
- Double-teaming is not allowed. However, help defense is strongly encouraged in the following instances:
  - **Lane Area:** If a defender is in the lane and the player he or she is guarding is within arm's reach, the defender is allowed to provide help defense. Since many goals are scored in the lane, it provides the defense more opportunity to properly defend this area.

- **Picks and Screens:** Defensive switching is allowed on offensive picks or screens. The non-screened defender can help his or her teammate by temporarily switching until the teammate recovers to defend their offensive player. This is commonly referred to as "help and recover." This prevents the offense from continually setting screens to gain an advantage.
- **Fast Breaks:** When an offensive player has beaten their defender, another defensive player may help. Upon stopping the fast break, defenders should return to guarding their assigned players. This rule is meant to prevent the defenders from helplessly watching the offensive player score without being able to help.
- At the beginning of each segment, players will line up at half court and "match up" with whom they are guarding. This act is performed to promote equal player match-ups. Equal match-ups combined with man-to-man defense create five competitive pairings on the court.
- Full court presses are not allowed. Defensive players may not guard their opponents in the backcourt. This will allow for more play to occur in the front court and create an equal opportunity for each child to participate both on offense and defense.
- ? Due to the shortness of the court, backcourt violations will not be called. If playing on a regulation-size court (84 feet) as opposed to cross-court, backcourt violations should be called.
- ~~□ A player committing two fouls in one segment must sit out the remainder of that segment. The next player in the rotation comes in as the substitute and is rewarded some extra game time. This does not change the normal rotation as the fouled-out player does not re-enter the game until he or she is scheduled to do so. This rule allows the offending player time to regroup during the remainder of the segment while realizing that there is a consequence for the violation.~~

## **Offense**

- The offense must purposefully attack the defense in every situation – no stalling. After a warning from the referee, a violation will be called resulting in a turnover. This will prevent a team with the lead from running the clock out by staying in the backcourt.
- Isolation plays will not be a part of Levels 1-3 because they take away the opportunity for improvement for all players and contradict the spirit of the rules.
- ~~□ Non-shooting fouls will result in the ball being in-bounded from either the baseline or sideline. All shooting fouls will result in free throws. By not administering "bonus" situation free throws, all players on the court can contribute to consistent game action.~~
- No score will be given for a basket in the wrong goal. It will be treated as a turnover. This will prevent further embarrassing a player for making this mistake.

## B45, G58 Modifications (Upward Level 3)

- Goal Height - ~~8 feet~~ → 10 feet
- Ball Size - ~~25"~~ → 28.5"
- Games consist of six, 6-minute segments and an 8 minute halftime. One minute is allotted for substitutions between segments - This keeps games to approximately an hour time frame.
- Score IS kept - Young athletes at this age should learn how to handle winning and losing after competition. This translates into life lessons.
- ? 3-second violation is called and results in a turnover - At this age, young athletes should understand the concept of offensive movement by not allowing an offensive player to stay in the lane more than 3 seconds.
- Coaches allowed to walk the sidelines to encourage and instruct players - The focus is for coaches to instruct and encourage players at all times.
- Clock runs continuously with special rules in effect with fewer than two minutes remaining in the game - Because the clock does not stop, this rule keeps the game moving without wasting the running game clock on lining up for free throw attempts.
  - Non-shooting fouls result in the offensive team getting ~~one point and~~ the ball.
  - Shooting fouls result in the offensive team ~~scoring two points~~ getting the ball. ~~The opposing team then takes possession.~~
  - Players fouled in the act of shooting and making the basket are credited with the basket ~~plus one point~~. The opposing team then takes possession.
- ~~□ Free throws are awarded on all shooting fouls – Two shots are attempted by the fouled player at the 12' line. Remaining players assume proper free throw positioning. Ball is live if second shot is missed.~~
- Stealing the ball off a dribble or pass is allowed – Players at this age should be taught and held to these basic basketball rules.
- Double dribble violation is called in all circumstances - Players at this age should be taught and held to these basic basketball rules.
- Traveling violation is called in all circumstances - Players at this age should be taught and held to these basic basketball rules.
- Fast breaks are allowed in any transition situation - Players at this age should be taught and held to these basic basketball rules.

**NOTE:** If there are no referees scheduled for a game, coaches are responsible for refereeing the game. One coach from each team should be on the court to referee the game. If one team only has one coach present, there will only be one referee on the court. If both teams have only one coach present, ask for fans to volunteer to referee the game.