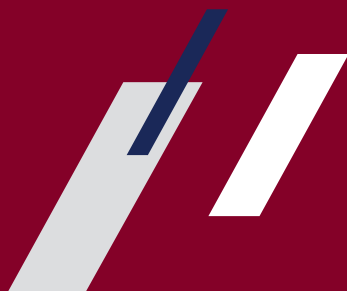


RULES OF PLAY //

# NEWTGEN

★ BASKETBALL ★



THE WOODLANDS  
METHODIST CHURCH



NEXTGEN BASKETBALL

# **RULES OF PLAY**

Rules are developed and officiated based on developmental appropriateness. Official National Federation of High School Association (NFHS) rules will apply to our Level 4 division; however, in Levels 1-3, rule modifications will apply. These modifications are tailored to meet athletes where they are in their playing abilities, allowing them to reach their full potential. Please be aware that while we aim for consistency in upholding the rules, some modifications may be interpreted and enforced on the floor by different officiating teams. Rules may be evaluated and adjusted after each season.

# LEVELS 1-3 RULE MODIFICATIONS

The following rules are basic outlines for Levels 1-3. For level-specific rules, see further below. Except where these modifications apply, all play is governed by the NFHS rule book.

## SUBSTITUTIONS

Coaches must adhere to the Upward Sports substitution system, allowing for equal playing time for all players.

## DEFENSE

At the beginning of each segment, players will line up at half court and match up with whom they are guarding. Colored wristbands will be used to identify defensive assignments, promoting equal player matchups. Equal matchups combined with man-to-man defense creates five competitive pairings on the court.

### MAN-TO-MAN DEFENSE

Teams may not install a zone defense. They must play man-to-man with wristbands that match who they are guarding. Players are not permitted to sag in excess from their assigned player. Players should be encouraged to be within arm's length of their assigned player. Players are only permitted to play half-court defense. Full-court pressure is not allowed. During the game, opposing coaches should work together and use discretion to match players of similar ability and size to ensure competitiveness and create equal opportunity for each player.

### DOUBLE TEAMING

Double teaming is not allowed; however, help defense is encouraged in the following instances:

- **Lane Area:** If a defender is in the lane area, guarding their player within arm's reach, they may help on the ball. Since most goals are scored in the lane, it gives the defense more opportunities to properly defend this area.
- **Picks/Screens:** Defensive switching is allowed on picks or screens. The non-screened defender can help their teammate by temporarily switching until the screened defender can recover and defend their 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 in a transition scenario, another defensive player may provide help. Upon stopping the fast break, players should recover to their assignments.

## **PRESS**

No pressing will be allowed. Defenders may not guard their assigned player in the backcourt.

## **OFFENSE**

### **ISOLATION**

Plays that create isolation matchups on the court are not allowed because they reduce the opportunities for teamwork and improvement for all players and contradict the spirit of the rules.

# **LEVEL-SPECIFIC RULES**

## **LEVEL 1**

### **FORMAT**

**Age:** Kindergarten (ages 6 and under)

**Goal Height:** 8 feet

**Ball Size:** Junior (27.5")

**Court Size:** Cross Court

**Clock Format:** Six periods, each lasting 4 minutes. Running Clock, plus a 3-minute halftime

**Scoring:** No score will be kept

**Timeouts:** No timeouts

**Overtime:** No overtime

**Seeding:** No seeding

## **DEFENSE**

### **STEALING**

Stealing from an offensive player who's in control of the ball (i.e., holding or dribbling) is not allowed. If the offensive player loses control (i.e., they lose the ball by accident) or throws the ball (to pass or shoot), the ball may be stolen at that point. This rule is in place to encourage players who are learning to dribble to use the correct form without the pressure of having the ball stolen.

### **FOULS**

All fouls will result in inbounding the ball from either the sideline or the baseline. We will not perform free throws or track fouls at this level. Should there be a particularly flagrant foul or a player fouls repeatedly or in ways that are inappropriate or out of line with the spirit of the game, the official, at their discretion, may ask the player to sub out for the remainder of any given period and/or half.

## **OFFENSE**

### **POSSESSION**

There will be a coin flip or rock-paper-scissors to gain first possession, after which possession is kept by the officials, alternating after a jump ball or period change. Teams will *not* switch goals at halftime to avoid any confusion for the players.

### **BACKCOURT VIOLATIONS**

Due to the shortness of the cross court, backcourt violations will not be called. However, the offense may not stall the game in the backcourt and must purposefully attack the defense. After a warning from the referee, a stalling violation may be called, resulting in a turnover.

### **3-SECOND VIOLATION**

No violation will be called.

### **DOUBLE DRIBBLE/TRAVEL**

Violations for traveling and double dribbling can be called but will not result in a turnover. Traveling will be called in cases where players take five or more steps without an attempted dribble. Double dribbling will be called in cases where a player double dribbles multiple times (two or more) in a single possession without an attempt to pass or shoot. No violation will be called for players dribbling with two hands or shuffling their feet to attempt a shot.

## **LEVEL 2**

### **FORMAT**

**Age:** First and Second Grade (approximately 6-8 years old)

**Goal Height:** 8 feet

**Ball Size:** Junior (27.5")

**Court Size:** Cross Court

**Clock Format:** Six periods, each lasting 6 minutes. Running Clock, plus a 3-minute halftime

**Scoring:** Optional or may be kept if coaches from both sides agree to it.

**Timeouts:** No timeouts

**Overtime:** No overtime

**Seeding:** No seeding

### **DEFENSE**

#### **STEALING**

Stealing from an offensive player who's in control of the ball (i.e., holding or dribbling) is not allowed. If the offensive player loses control (i.e., they lose the ball by accident) or throws the ball (to pass or shoot), the ball may be stolen at that point. This rule is in place to encourage players who are learning to dribble to use the correct form without the pressure of having the ball stolen.

#### **FOULS**

Free throws will be administered on any shooting foul. The clock continues to run during the free throw. Non-shooting fouls will be inbounded from either the sideline or the baseline. Fouls will not be tracked at this level. Should there be a particularly flagrant foul or a player fouls repeatedly or in ways that are inappropriate or out of line with the spirit of the game, the official, at their discretion, may ask the player to sub out for the remainder of any given period and/or half.

## OFFENSE

### POSSESSION

There will be a coin flip or rock-paper-scissors to gain first possession, after which possession is kept by the officials, alternating after a jump ball or period change. Teams will *not* switch goals at halftime to avoid any confusion for the players.

### BACKCOURT VIOLATIONS

Due to the shortness of the cross court, backcourt violations will not be called. However, the offense may not stall the game in the backcourt and must purposefully attack the defense. After a warning from the referee, a stalling violation may be called, resulting in a turnover.

### 3-SECOND VIOLATION

No violation will be called.

### DOUBLE DRIBBLE/TRAVEL

At this level, violations for traveling and double dribbling will be called and result in a turnover. Traveling will be called in cases where players take five or more steps without an attempted dribble. Double dribbling will be called in all cases where a player double dribbles multiple times (two or more) in a single possession without an attempt to pass or shoot, or they dribble with two hands on the ball.

## LEVEL 3

### FORMAT

**Age:** Third and Fourth grade (approximately 8-10 years old)

**Goal Height:** 9 feet

**Ball Size:** Intermediate/Women's (28.5")

**Court Size:** Full Court

**Clock Format:** Six periods, each lasting 6 minutes. Running Clock, plus a 3-minute halftime.

*\*Clock stops for all free throw attempts*

**Scoring:** Score is kept.

**Timeouts:** Each team has two 30-second timeouts per game. No substitutions

can be made during the stoppage of play.

**Overtime:** 2-minute period starting with a new jump ball

**Seeding:** Only if the division has more than four teams

## **DEFENSE**

### **STEALING**

Stealing is allowed.

### **FOULS**

Shooting and non-shooting fouls are administered according to NFHS rules. The clock will stop for the administration of the free throw and resume upon either the rebound or inbound. Fouls will be tracked at this level. All players are allowed five fouls per game. After the fifth foul is committed, the player will be out for the remainder of the game. Coaches should sub in the next available player on their roster if a player is fouled out.

### **TEAM FOULS**

After the fifth team foul committed in each period, two bonus free throws will be awarded to the opposing team.

## **OFFENSE**

### **POSSESSION**

A jump ball will be used to start the game. Possession will then alternate after a jump ball or period change. Teams will switch goals after halftime.

### **BACKCOURT VIOLATIONS**

Backcourt violations will be enforced.

### **3-SECOND VIOLATIONS**

If a player stays in the paint/lane area for more than three consecutive seconds, it will be called. Officials will give verbal warnings and allow approximately five seconds to correct before rule enforcement. This violation results in a turnover.

### **DOUBLE DRIBBLE/TRAVEL**

At this level, all violations for traveling and double dribbling will be called and result in a turnover.

## **LEVEL 4**

Play follows the rules governed by the NFHS rule book.

### **FORMAT**

**Age:** Middle School (Fifth through Eighth Grade)/Boys Division/Girls Division

**Goal Height:** 10 feet

**Ball Size:** Boys - Official (29.5") / Girls - Intermediate/Women's (28.5")

**Court Size:** Full Court

**Clock Format:** Four quarters, each lasting 6 minutes. Clock stops at each whistle, indicating the stoppage of play.

**Scoring:** Score is kept.

**Timeouts:** Each team has three 60-second timeouts and two 30-second timeouts per game.

**Overtime:** 2-minute period starting with a new jump ball

**Seeding:** Only if the division has more than four teams.

### **OFFENSE**

#### **Full NFHS rules apply**

Playing time requirements change at this level. We will no longer use the Upward Substitution system. Coaches will have discretion over when and how they substitute players in any dead ball situation. Coaches must, however, adhere to these minimums:

- Each player must play at least one quarter (6 minutes) of each game.
- Each player must be given playing time in both halves.

## **DEFENSE**

### **Full NFHS rules apply**

Zone and man defense are allowed at this level.

Press defense in the backcourt is allowed at this level unless the team has a 15+ point advantage.

## **NATIONAL FEDERATION OF HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS RULE BOOK**

You can find a copy of the rule book at [\*www.nfhs.org\*](http://www.nfhs.org)

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Backcourt:** the half of the court a team is defending which contains their own basket.

**Backcourt Violation:** occurs when an offensive team established in the frontcourt moves the ball back across the mid-court line into the backcourt without it being touched by a defender.

**Baseline:** also called the end line, this is the boundary line running along the width of the court behind each basket.

**Cross-Court Pass:** refers to passing or moving the ball from one side of the court to the opposite side, typically across the key or longitudinal center line.

**Dead Ball:** any time the ball is not in play, characterized by a stopped clock and a referee's whistle, meaning no points can be scored.

**Defensive Switching:** a tactic where defenders exchange the offensive players they are guarding when a screen or handoff occurs, aiming to neutralize advantages.

**Double Dribble:** a violation that occurs when a player stops their dribble (by holding the ball or using two hands simultaneously) and then resumes dribbling, or dribbles with both hands at once.

**Double Teaming:** a defensive tactic where two defenders simultaneously guard one offensive player to apply intense pressure, force turnovers, or hinder scoring.

**Fast Break:** an offensive strategy where a team quickly transitions from defense to offense – usually after a rebound, steal or turnover – to rapidly move the ball up court and score before the opposing team can set up their defense.

**Foul:** an infraction of the rules resulting from illegal contact with an opponent or unsportsmanlike behavior.

- **Blocking:** illegal personal contact that impedes the progress of an opponent who does not have the ball.
- **Charging:** illegal personal contact by pushing or moving into an opponent's torso.
- **Flagrant Foul:** violent or excessive contact, classified as a Penalty 1 (unnecessary) or Penalty 2 (unnecessary and excessive).
- **Personal Foul:** illegal contact such as hitting, pushing, slapping or holding, which impedes an opponent's movement.
- **Technical Foul:** penalizes non-contact, unsportsmanlike behavior by players, coaches, or trainers (e.g., arguing with officials or swearing).

**Free Throw:** an unopposed, 1-point scoring attempt awarded to a player from the free-throw line (15 feet from the basket) after an opponent commits a foul.

**Full-Court Defense:** often called a full-court press, this is a high-intensity defensive strategy where a team defends the entire 94-foot length of the basketball court, rather than retreating to their half of the court.

**Half-Court Defense:** a defensive strategy set up only after the opposing team has brought the ball across the half-court line.

**Half:** one of the two main periods that divide a game, separated by a halftime intermission.

**Handoff:** an offensive action where a player with the ball dribbles toward a teammate and hands the ball off to them at close range.

**Help Defense:** a defensive strategy where a defender temporarily leaves their assigned offensive player to assist a teammate who has been beaten or to cut off a driving lane.

**Help and Recover:** help defense is the act of a defender temporarily leaving their assigned offensive player to stop a teammate's opponent who has driven past them, while recover is the immediate return to one's original player once the threat is neutralized. This, then, is commonly known as "help and recover," designed to prevent easy layups and manage dribble penetration.

**Holding:** a personal foul involving illegal physical contact that restricts an opponent's freedom of movement, usually committed using the hands or arms.

**Inbound:** the act of passing the ball from out of bounds into the court to start play, typically after a made basket, foul, or violation.

**In Control:** refers to a player having possession of a live ball while holding or dribbling it, or a team maintaining possession during passing or an interrupted dribble.

**Isolation:** an offensive strategy where four players move away from the ball-handler, clearing the side of the court to create a one-on-one matchup.

**Jump Ball:** a method used to start or resume play where an official tosses the ball into the air between two opposing players, who jump to tap it toward a teammate.

**Key:** also known as the paint or restricted area, the key is the restricted, often-painted area on the court located directly in front of each basket, encompassing the free-throw lane and a circle at the top.

**Lane Area:** the rectangular, often-painted area on the court extending from the baseline to the free-throw line (15 feet from the backboard).

**Live Ball:** a ball in play, occurring when the game is active, such as during a jump ball, throw-in, or free throw, allowing teams to score, steal, or advance the ball. It becomes live when it is in play, and the game clock is eligible to start, specifically when it is released on a jump ball, placed at a player's disposal for a throw-in, or placed at the disposal of a free thrower.

**Man-To-Man Defense (or Man Defense):** a strategy where each defender is assigned to guard a specific offensive player.

**Matchup:** the direct, one-on-one competition between an offensive player and their designated defender.

**National Federation of High School Associations (NFHS):** the governing body that writes the official rules, sets guidelines, and provides education for high school basketball in the United States.

**Non-Shooting Foul:** a personal foul committed against a player who is not in the act of shooting, such as while dribbling, passing, or defending a rebound.

**Paint:** also known as the key or restricted area, it is the rectangular, usually painted, area on a basketball court directly under the basket.

**Period/Quarter:** a designated segment of timed play that divides a game, with four quarters forming a standard regulation game.

**Period Change:** the mandatory break and transition between the subdivided segments of a game, such as between quarters or halves.

**Picks (or Screens):** a legal offensive move where a player stands in the path of a defender to block them, freeing up a teammate to drive, shoot, or receive a pass.

**Possession:** a team has possession when a player is holding, passing, or dribbling the ball; this is a team's opportunity to score, starting when they gain control of the ball and ending when the ball changes to the other team via a made shot, turnover, or defensive rebound.

**Press:** an aggressive, high-intensity defensive strategy where defenders apply pressure across the entire court (full-court) or half-court to disrupt the offense, force turnovers, and create quick scoring opportunities.

**Rebound:** a statistic awarded to a player who gains possession of the ball after a missed field goal or free throw.

- **Defensive Rebound:** a defender secures the ball after a missed shot, taking possession and stopping the offense. These are more frequent due to better positioning.
- **Offensive Rebound:** an offensive player recovers their own team's missed shot, earning a "second chance" to score.

**Running Clock:** the game clock continues to run.

**Sag (or Sagging Off):** a defensive tactic where a defender purposely gives their opponent significant space, backing off to stand closer to the basket rather than staying close to their check.

**Seeding:** the ranking of teams based on regular-season performance to organize a tournament bracket. This ensures the best teams advance furthest and creates a competitive, fair structure.

**Shooting Foul:** a personal foul committed by a defender against an offensive player who is in the "act of shooting."

**Sideline:** one of the two boundary lines, typically 94 feet long, that run the entire length of the court, separating the in-bounds playing area from out-of-bounds.

**Stalling Violation:** an unsportsmanlike act where the offensive team intentionally acts to waste time rather than trying to score, often to protect a lead.

**Stealing:** occurs when a defensive player legally causes a turnover by taking the ball from an offensive player, intercepting a pass, or deflecting a dribble/pass that results in gaining possession for their team.

**Substitution:** the act of replacing a player currently on the court with a teammate from the bench, occurring during a stoppage in play (dead ball).

**Team Foul:** the cumulative total of personal fouls committed by all players on a team during a specific period (quarter or half).

**Timeout:** a halt in the play.

**Transition Scenario:** refers to the rapid, split-second shift from defense to offense (transition offense) or offense to defense (transition defense) immediately following a change in possession.

**Travel (or Traveling):** a violation that occurs when a player holding a live ball moves one or both feet illegally, typically taking more than two steps without dribbling, shuffling their feet, or moving their established pivot foot.

**Turnover:** when the offensive team loses possession of the ball to the opposing team before attempting a field goal or free throw.

**Upward Sports:** the world's largest Christian youth sports league, providing basketball for children (typically Kindergarten-6th grade) that focuses on skill development, character, and faith.

**Upward Substitution System:** a structured, predetermined rotation designed specifically for youth leagues to guarantee equal playing time for all participants, regardless of skill level.

**Zone Defense:** a strategy where defenders guard specific areas of the court rather than individual opponents.

**3-Second Violation:** occurs when an offensive player remains in the opposing team's restricted area—commonly known as the “key” or “paint”—for more than three consecutive seconds while their team has control of the ball in the frontcourt.

