

2026 YOUTH BASKETBALL

RULE BOOK



CITY OF ESCALON



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INTRODUCTION

YOUTH BASKETBALL PHILOSOPHY

The coach of young athletes is the single most important adult in all of children's athletics. Other adults, such as officials and administrators, have important responsibilities, too. But no task is as important as that of the coach who must guide young children physically, socially and emotionally as they grow through childhood.

The youth sports coach is required to play many roles. Most prominent among these is being a teacher and an instructor of skills, a friend who listens and offers advice, a substitute parent when their parents are not available or accessible, a disciplinarian who rewards and corrects behavior, and a cheerleader who provides encouragement when everything goes wrong. The age and development level of the athletes will determine how frequently the coach is asked to assume the various roles. Indeed, coaches may find themselves switching roles minute by minute as the fast-moving, complex nature of a contest call for different responsibilities.

For young players to achieve success in any endeavor, they need to be confident that their efforts will be met with affirmation. Particularly with very young players, negative and impatient remarks can be very destructive to both spirit and motivation. Most children will work harder and achieve much more if they are met with enthusiastic support and helpful criticism.

Young people at this age are very impressionable and are developing attitudes that they will take with them for the rest of their life. Thus, it is imperative that you set the best possible example during practice and games. These kids and their parents are counting on you.

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY AND SEASON FORMAT

PLAYER REGISTRATION

Registration will open at least 10 weeks in advance of the first league game via digital platform. Registration will include waivers and acknowledgment of data sharing.

Players must be registered individually. There is no team registration.

For Jr. Rookies participants, staff will make efforts to accommodate requests for specific buddies and/or coaches. However, please be aware that "buddy requests" do not assure players will be placed on the same team as their chosen buddy.

"Buddy requests" are not available for the Rookie and higher divisions, as team assignments in these categories are determined through a draft process.

Late registrants will be assigned to teams solely based on team availability. After uniforms have been ordered, a player can only be placed on a team if a uniform becomes available, typically resulting from a withdrawal prior to the distribution of uniforms.

PLAYER VERIFICATION

If a parent, player, or coach is found to have manipulated or attempted to manipulate identification or other verification documents, the NBA reserves the right to dismiss that player from the League.

ROSTER

Jr. Rookie Teams are to have rosters with a minimum of five (5) players and a maximum of 7 players.

Rookie Division and Higher Teams are to have rosters with a minimum of eight (8) players and a maximum of 12 players.

In the event a full roster of 8 cannot be fielded, some teams may have 12 players.

Jr. NBA Leagues have a "no cut" policy. Every player that registers will have a roster spot.

SEASON FORMAT

There will be practice prior to a team's first game and there must be at least six (6) games within league play. There will not be more than two (2) games per week per team during regular season league play.

At the conclusion of a season, all players, coaches, parents, staff members and volunteers will receive a thank you email.

Any player participating in a Jr. NBA League should be mindful of participation limits across other basketball activities to help prevent overuse injuries and burnout.

PLAYER SEGMENTATION

Player division assignments are determined by the child's age as of January 1st of the year the season begins. For instance, if a player is 5 years old at the time of enrollment in November but turns 6 in December, they will be assigned to the Rookie Division instead of the Jr. Rookie Division.

Players are allowed to "play up" an age group.

If it is discovered that a parent, player, or coach has falsified or attempted to falsify the date of birth information, the program retains the authority to expel the player in question from the league.

- Jr. Rookies will include players aged 4 and 5.
- Rookie will include players age 6.
- JV will include players ages 7 & 8.
- Starter will include players ages 9-11.
- All-Stars will include players ages 12-14.

DIVISIONS BASED ON GENDER

The Jr. Rookie and Rookie will be co-ed.

If the number of registrations is sufficient to form a minimum of four teams per gender, the Starter, JV and All-Star divisions will be organized into separate gender-based divisions.

*Divisions may be combined if registration is low.

In scenarios where gender-based divisions are established, each girls' division team will be designated with a WNBA team identity. Coaches have the option to request a specific WNBA team for their team, subject to the availability of uniforms corresponding to that team.

SIBLINGS

Siblings eligible for the same division will be placed on the same team upon request. It is imperative that sibling status be clearly indicated during registration, as failure to do so may result in them being assigned to different teams. This provision applies exclusively to siblings related by birth, marriage, or adoption.

Exceptions to this rule may be considered under special circumstances, at the discretion of the recreation division staff. In such cases, please reach out to the recreation staff for approval.

Furthermore, if any parent, player, or coach is found to have falsely represented or attempted to misrepresent a familial relationship with another player for the purpose of being placed on the same team, the recreation division reserves the right to remove the offending player(s) from the league.

TEAM SELECTION

To ensure healthy and balanced competition (i.e., preventing "stacked" teams). Team selection is by form of a "Draft". Drafts have been proven to be a successful approach to ensuring balanced rosters.

All head coaches or assistant coaches must attend the Jr. NBA League Draft. They can send in a representative in their place if they cannot make it.

The draft is organized as a "Snake." This means if there are eight (8) teams, teams draw to determine the draft order.

Example: Team 1 picks first and each team gets a pick through Team 8. After Team 8's pick, the draft will snake, meaning Team 8 will pick again, and then Team 7 down through Team 1. Then, Team 1 will pick again as the Draft snakes back up and continues.

After the completion of the draft, roster changes will only be permitted in the event of an error identified by the staff. In cases where an unequal number of players exists across team rosters, Recreation staff may allow late registrations to balance the number of players on each team.

PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

PRACTICES

Jr. Rookies: Each team will be provided one (1) 15-minute pre-game practice/warm-up period using one-quarter (1/4) of a full court (half of the half-court used for gameplay) and one (1) basket.

For the 2026 basketball season, the City will attempt to secure a limited number of outdoor practice locations. Practice space cannot be guaranteed for all teams or divisions.

- Any available practice slots will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis, must be reserved online, and are limited to one (1) practice slot per team per week
- Practice availability may be limited to certain divisions
- All divisions may participate, but practices are not required

The City will not provide practice equipment. Teams must supply their own basketballs, pinnies, and any additional practice equipment.

For scheduled games, the City will provide one jersey per player per season and game balls for gameplay only.

PRE GAME WARM UP

Jr. Rookies: Each team will be provided one (1) 15-minute pre-game practice/warm-up period using one-quarter (1/4) of a full court (half of the half-court used for gameplay) and one (1) basket.

Rookie Division & Up: Teams will be provided a 10-minute pre-game warm-up period. A 5-minute transition break will follow the warm-up to allow teams to clear the court and prepare for game play.

GAMES

Games are scheduled to occur on a weekly basis, subject to the availability of locations. As the league relies on third-party gym rentals, adherence to their scheduling and availability is mandatory. Consequently, this may result in occasional bye weeks.

Each team is guaranteed a minimum of six games. Depending on the total number of participating teams, additional games may be scheduled to ensure a comprehensive playing experience for all teams.

Owing to time limitations, overtime periods will not be permitted for tied games. All games will conclude at the scheduled time, regardless of a tie.

STAFFING

There will be Recreation staff at every location where practice/game is held. The minimum age for any staff should follow applicable local laws. All staff will be clearly identified. Officials must wear black and white stripes, black pants or shorts, and black shoes. Staff is responsible for supporting event setup and breakdown.

STANDARDS BY DIVISION

JR. ROOKIE DIVISION (AGES 4-5)

This division is strictly for the fun and enjoyment of the participants. The focus is on learning the basic skills and fundamentals of the game. Competition must be downplayed. It will be an instructional format with scrimmage play as the scenario.

- Teams: Coed composition.
- Defensive Strategy: Teams must play man-to-man defense, setting up in the key area.
- Game Format: There will be a 15-minute practice/warm-up, followed by a 5-minute break or continuation of practice, and then a 10-minute scrimmage.
- Time-Outs: Four per game
- Player Participation: All players play the entire game.
- Basket Height: 6 feet
- Size of Ball: Official mini size (#3).
- Scoring and Standings: Scoring and standings will not be kept.
- Game Rules: No pressing allowed.
- Referees: One coach from each team will be on the playing surface to referee, teach, and instruct their team.
- Equipment Setup: First teams set up hoops, last teams take down hoops (including sandbags).

ROOKIE DIVISION (AGE 6)

This division is strictly for the fun and enjoyment of the participants. The focus is on learning the basic skills and fundamentals of the game. Competition must be downplayed. It will be an instructional format with scrimmage play as the scenario.

- Teams: Coed composition.
- Game Format: Teams will have a 10-minute warm-up before the game, followed by a 5-minute transition break. The game will consist of four (4) 7½-minute quarters, with a 1-minute break between quarters and a 3-minute halftime break. Teams will switch sides at halftime.
- Defensive Strategy: Teams must play man-to-man defense, setting up in the key area.
- Game Rules: 5v5 game structure. Three seconds, traveling, and double dribble are allowed, with coaches providing instruction. Change possession on other flagrant infractions. No pressing.
- Player Participation: All players must play at least two complete quarters of every game.
- Time-Outs: Two 30-second time-outs per team per half.
- Size of Ball: Girls and Boys (size 5; 27.5")
- Basket Height: 8'
- Size of Court: Half court
- League Standings: No league standings or post-season.
- Bonus Foul Shooting: For other scoring divisions, each bonus foul will result in one point, and double bonus fouls will yield two points, along with possession of the ball out of bounds. No free throws will be shot for these fouls.
- Referees: One coach from each team will be on the playing surface to referee, teach, and instruct their team.
- Timekeeping: One timekeeper will be provided per game.
- Outdoor Practices: At team's discretion.
- Practice Format: Focus on a different fundamental each week.
 - First Week – Shooting
 - Second Week – Passing
 - Third Week – Dribbling
 - Fourth Week – Rebounding
 - Fifth Week – Defense and Agility
 - Sixth Week – Moving without the ball and Screening
- Equipment Setup: First teams set up hoops, last teams take down hoops.

JV DIVISION (AGES 7-8)

This division will focus on learning the basic skills and fundamentals of the game. Competition must be downplayed. It will be an instructional format with scrimmage play as the scenario.

- Teams: Gender-Specific Divisions or Co-Ed
- Game Schedule: Teams will have a **10-minute warm-up** before the game. Games will be played in **four (4) 10-minute running quarters**, with a **1-minute break between quarters** and a **3-minute halftime break**. Teams will switch sides at halftime.
- Defensive Formations: Teams may use any defensive formation.
- Game Rules: 5v5 game structure. No pressing and no bonus foul shooting allowed.
- Player Participation: All players must play at least two complete quarters of every game
- Time-Outs: Two 30-second time-outs per team per game.
- Size of Ball: Girls and Boys (size 5; 27.5")
- Basket Height: 8 feet.
- Size of Court: Half Court
- Lane Violations: Five seconds; Foul line distance is 14 feet.
- Distance of 3-Point Arc: Not Applicable
- League Standings: No league standings or post-season.
- Bonus Foul Shooting: Bonus foul shooting will be implemented.
- Referees: One referee is provided per game.
- Timekeeping: One timekeeper will be provided per game.
- Outdoor Practices: At team's discretion. Focus on a different fundamental each week.
 - First Week – Shooting
 - Second Week – Passing
 - Third Week – Dribbling
 - Fourth Week – Rebounding
 - Fifth Week – Defense and Agility
 - Sixth Week – Moving without the ball and Screening

Equipment Setup: First teams set up hoops, last teams take down hoops.

STARTER DIVISION (AGES 9-11)

- Teams: Gender-Specific Divisions or Co-Ed
- Game Schedule: Teams will have a **10-minute warm-up** before the game. Games will be played in **four (4) 10-minute running quarters**, with a **1-minute break between quarters** and a **3-minute halftime break**. Teams will switch sides at halftime.
- Defensive Formations: Teams may use any defensive formation.
- Game Rules: 5v5 game structure. Pressing allowed in the 4th period. Leading team may not press when leading by 15 points or more.
- Player Participation: All players must play at least two complete quarters of every game.
- Time-Outs: Two 30-second time-outs per team per game.
- Size of Ball: Girls and Boys (size 6; 28.5")
- Basket Height: 10 feet.
- Size of Court: Full Court
- Distance of 3-Point Arc: Not Applicable.
- Distance of Free-Throw Line: 14 feet.
- League Standings: No league standings or post-season.
- Bonus Foul Shooting: bonus foul shooting will be implemented.
- Referees: Two referees are provided per game
- Timekeeping: One timekeeper will be provided
- Roster Submission: Teams must submit a lineup/roster to the scorekeeper prior to the game.
- Outdoor Practices: At team's discretion.
- Practice Format: Practices should emphasize these fundamentals: Jump shots, pivots and slides, defensive techniques in stance and closeouts, ball handling, passing and receiving, shooting, individual ball moves and lay-ups.
- Equipment Setup: First teams set up hoops, last teams take down hoops.

ALL-STAR DIVISION (AGES 12-14)

- Teams: Gender-Specific Divisions or Co-Ed
- Game Schedule: Teams will have a **10-minute warm-up** before the game. Games will be played in **four (4) 10-minute running quarters**, with a **1-minute break between quarters** and a **3-minute halftime break**. Teams will switch sides at halftime.
- Defensive Formations: Teams may use any defensive formation.
- Game Rules: 5v5 game structure. Pressing allowed throughout the competition. Leading team may not press when leading by 25 points or more
- Player Participation: All players must play at least two complete quarters of every game.
- Time-Outs: Two 30-second time-outs per team per game.
- Size of Ball: Girls and Boys (size 6; 28.5").
- Basket Height: 10 feet.
- Size of Court: Full Court
- Distance of 3-Point Arc: Not Applicable.
- Distance of Free-Throw Line: 14 feet.
- League Standings: No league standings or post-season.
- Bonus Foul Shooting: bonus foul shooting will be implemented.
- Referees: Two referees are provided per game
- Timekeeping: One timekeeper will be provided
- Roster Submission: Teams must submit a lineup/roster to the scorekeeper prior to the game.
- Outdoor Practices: At team's discretion.
- Practice Format: Practices should emphasize these fundamentals: Jump shots, pivots and slides, defensive techniques in stance and closeouts, ball handling, passing and receiving, shooting, individual ball moves and lay-ups.
- Equipment Setup: First teams set up hoops, last teams take down hoops

BENCH RULES

Two (2) coaches/bench personnel are allowed on the bench. Only coaches and players are allowed in the team area. It is important for coaches to ensure that parents, family members, and friends stay in the spectator stands. Additionally, children must not be left unsupervised in the gyms during practices or games.

The home team wears dark jerseys, and the visitor wears light jerseys. (If the two teams agree, they may interchange jersey colors). All uniforms must be properly tucked prior to entering the game. A team may only have team verified players and coaches on the bench.

PROTESTS

- All decisions made by referees are final and binding. This applies to rulings on substitutions, timekeeping and rule violations, suspension of games, and player or coach ejections.
- No protests will be permitted; all game results are deemed final and conclusive.

PRE-GAME RULES

- Every player and coach will shake hands with referees pre-game.

POST-GAME RULES

- Players and coaches will shake hands at the end of all games.

EQUIPMENT STANDARDS

UNIFORMS

The home team wears light jerseys, and the visiting team wears dark jerseys (unless both teams agree to switch). Players may wear undershirts, sleeves, tights, wristbands, and headbands. All items must be black, gray, white or the predominant color of the jersey. Undershirts must be a single solid color and must have sleeves that are the same length and cannot have frayed or ragged edges.

Black sole shoes that scuff are not allowed.

EQUIPMENT

Game and practice basketballs are supplied by the Escalon Recreation Department and must be returned after each use. For pre-game practice, two (2) basketballs will be provided for each team per court.

COACHING

Coaches are responsible for teaching the basic fundamentals of basketball in a fun and enjoyable environment. Their role is to apply these skills in game situations, presenting the

challenges of competition. Coaches should also foster sportsmanship and team play through their example and instruction.

COACHING INFORMATION

- **Team Leadership:** Teams are allowed one (1) Head Coach and one (1) Assistant Coach each.
- **Family Assignments:** The Coach, Assistant Coach, Sponsor, and their respective children will be assigned to the same team.
- **Responsibility:** Coaches are accountable for the conduct and behavior of their players, as well as the fans associated with their team.
- **Certification Requirements:** All coaches and assistant coaches must undergo fingerprinting and complete state-mandated concussion training.
- **Skill Development:** Coaches are expected to develop fundamental basketball skills in their players. This should be achieved by implementing an organized and comprehensive plan for both practice sessions and games.
- **Communication:** It is essential for coaches to maintain open and effective communication with both parents and players. This includes providing information about the program and keeping everyone informed about upcoming events.
- **Distribution of Materials:** Coaches are responsible for distributing game schedules, uniforms, and picture order forms to the players and their families.
- **Player Engagement:** It is important for coaches to reach out and follow up with players who are absent from games or practices, ensuring their engagement and participation.
- **Meeting Attendance and Paperwork:** Coaches must attend all required meetings and clinics, and complete and submit the necessary paperwork in a timely manner.
- **Code of Conduct Submission:** All coaches must submit signed Code of Conduct forms to the Recreation Department before the second game of the season.
- **Sportsmanship and Cooperation:** Coaches are expected to display the highest level of sportsmanship and cooperation during both games and practices. Setting a positive example is crucial.
- **Prioritize Enjoyment:** Above all, coaches should strive to make the experience enjoyable. Ensuring that practices and games are fun is key to fostering a love of the sport in players.

GAME CONDUCT AND PENALTIES

FOUL REGULATIONS AND EJECTIONS

FOUL LIMIT

A player will be required to exit the game after committing their fifth personal foul.

EJECTION CRITERIA

Players and coaches are subject to ejection for engaging in abusive language, fighting, unsportsmanlike or unnecessary conduct on or off the court, or any grossly uncooperative actions towards the game, players, coaches, or referees.

GAME FORFEITURE

Any game involving ineligible players will automatically be forfeited.

SIDELINE BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

CONDUCT TOWARDS PLAYERS AND REFEREES:

Coaches, players, parents, and spectators are prohibited from attempting to distract players or referees.

Any infraction will first result in caution, followed by ejection and further disciplinary actions as determined by the Recreation Coordinator.

No coach should make derogatory remarks or gestures towards referees, players, or spectators. Anyone found doing so will be required to leave the court for the remainder of the game.

ROLE OF SPECTATORS

Coaching from the spectator area is not permitted.

COMPLIANCE WITH VENUE RULES

All rules posted at EHS & El Portal gymnasiums must be adhered to.

PROHIBITION OF ALCOHOL AND SMOKING

The consumption of alcoholic beverages and smoking are strictly forbidden at youth events, with no exceptions.



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**DIGITAL
VERSION CAN
BE FOUND
HERE**



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