



Denver Youth Sports Winter Basketball Rules 2025-2026

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

- A. Implementation of Standing Rules - Managers, coaches, and umpires/officials are, by regulation, under the jurisdiction of and accountable to Denver Parks and Recreation and the Youth Sports Team. Failure to comply with the league rules and rules stated within, or to “stretch” the rules in a manner not determined in the best interest of youth instruction and development, will not be allowed.
- B. Extraordinary Provision Rule - It is recognized that there may be extraordinary circumstances where these rules will not resolve all possible problems. In cases such as this, the Youth Sports Team will have final say regarding rule interpretations.
- C. All managers/coaches, including volunteers, are encouraged to be **NAYS** (National Alliance for Youth Sports) certified, and all head coaches must be at least 18 years of age by the first scheduled game. Head coaches under age 18 must be approved by Youth Sports and be supervised by full-time staff. Failure to comply or falsification will result in expulsion of the coach from the league and team to forfeit all games up to the point of violation. **All volunteer coaches must complete a volunteer application and pass an annual background check.**
- D. Parents will be required to sign the parent’s code of ethics prior to the first game of the season. Parents are encouraged to attend a preseason parent meeting.
- E. Eligibility - Participation fee requirements will be determined by Denver Parks and Recreation Administration. Fees must be paid by date determined and specified by Denver Parks and Recreation Administration.
- F. Team Roster/Paperwork - Paperwork will include a complete team roster, Coaches’ and Players’ NAYS Code of Ethics forms, and valid proof of age for each participating player. Coaches / Recreation Centers will be responsible for providing all required paperwork, if requested by the Youth Sports Team, within 24 hours of the request. Player additions to teams may be made up to **February 1, 2026**. Official rosters will be produced through ActiveNet by the Youth Sports Team. A PENALTY FOR FAILURE TO COMPLY OR FALSIFICATION WILL RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION TO THE PARTICIPANT, COACH AND CENTER.
 - Players may not transfer from one team to another once they have played in an official league game without Youth Sports approval.
- G. At least one coach who is on the official roster must be available as manager or coach at all games. Coaches must attend Youth Sports preseason training.
- H. Site Supervisors will determine if a game is official.

II. SAFETY RULES

- A. Sportsmanship and Conduct
 - 1. Managers, coaches, players, parents, and spectators will not attempt to instruct, taunt, threaten or in any way verbally or physically abuse a referee/official, Site Supervisor, coach, player, or member of the Youth Sports Team before, during or after any game.

2. Any unsportsmanlike conduct by players, coaches, and/or spectators is not allowed before, during, or after any game. Failure to comply may result in immediate removal from the game, as directed by the official or DPR Staff.
 3. Failure to comply with departmental policies and Code of Ethics may result in probation/termination.
 4. If a manager, coach, or assistant coach is ejected from any game during the season, s/he may be terminated from their position with the Youth Sports program, subject to review by the Youth Sports Leadership Committee. If the coach is a full-time employee, they will be reported to their immediate supervisor as well as the Directors of Recreation.
 5. If a player is ejected from any two (2) games during the season, s/he will be removed from the roster, subject to review by the Youth Sports Leadership Committee.
 6. Ejection from a game for any rule infraction may result in immediate removal from the facility, as directed by the official or DPR Staff.
 7. Ejection from a game for any rule infraction will result in suspension from the team's next scheduled game and may result in suspension from practice or attending other DPR activities at the discretion of DPR Staff.
- B. Managers or coaches who are, in the opinion of the Site Supervisor, intentionally running up the score will be addressed at the game (if not possible, the manager or coach will be contacted within 48 hours of completion of the game). If further unsportsmanlike behavior continues, there may be disciplinary measures taken including but not limited to:
1. Youth Sports Team will work with direct supervisor to issue a verbal warning.
 2. One-game suspension and appearance before Youth Sports Supervisor.
 3. Appearance before Recreation Director and possible further progressive discipline.
- C. Teams may have a maximum of two coaches on the team bench during games. Only one coach may be standing during gameplay. Standing coaches must remain in the designated coaches' area, as determined per site by the officials.
- D. After each game, each team is responsible for removing their trash (water bottles, cans, etc.).
- E. No drugs, alcohol, marijuana, or tobacco (including vapor pens) should be used on or near the field of play or within indoor facilities. Anyone under the influence of drugs, alcohol or marijuana will be asked to leave the premises.
- F. In the event of an injury which requires medical assistance, call 911. The Site Supervisor, manager or coach will remain in charge of emergency treatment until advanced medical responders arrive. If injury dictates that the injured player is not to be moved, game play will be delayed as necessary.
- G. It will be the Youth Sports Team's responsibility to decide to make up any games cancelled because of inclement weather, as well as arrange for officials.
- H. A player who is bleeding must come out of the game until bleeding is stopped. If blood is on a game jersey, the blood must be removed prior to re-entering the game.
- I. No casts, hard or soft, are allowed during league play.
- J. **Jewelry is prohibited.** This includes but not limited to watches, bracelets, necklaces, earrings, or other piercings (taping over is not allowed), and acrylic nails. Hair adornments (hair beads, hard head bands, hair bobby pins, hard hair clips) may be worn in the hair if they are secured close to the head and do not present a risk of injury to the player, teammates, or opponents (at the discretion of Site Supervisors and Officials). 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.

III. PROTESTS AND FORFEITS

- A. Protests must be made at the time in question and reported to the Site Supervisor. Protesting party must present protest in writing to a Youth Sports Team within 24 hours with an accurate

description of the protest, clearly stating which rule has been violated. Protests will only be accepted based on rule interpretations, not on the judgment of the umpires/officials calls.

- B. Any player not listed on the team roster may not play in the league. A team who allows a non-rostered player to play will forfeit game or games in which the player participated. In addition, the manager and/or coach responsible for allowing the non-rostered player to play will face disciplinary action.
- C. All forfeits need to be reported to the Youth Sports Team and affected teams prior to game time.

IV. AGE DIVISIONS

1. 6U (5-6) age classification: any player turning 7 years of age before January 18, 2026, is ineligible.
2. 8U (7-8) age classification: any player turning 9 years of age before January 18, 2026, is ineligible.
3. 10U (9-10) age classification: any player turning 11 years of age before January 18, 2026, is ineligible.
4. 12U (11-12) age classification: any player turning 13 years of age before January 18, 2026, is ineligible.
5. 14U (13-14) age classification: any player turning 15 years of age before January 18, 2026, is ineligible.
6. 17U (15-17) age classification: any player turning 18 years of age before January 18, 2026, is ineligible.
 - 18-year-old high school students will be eligible to play with the Youth Sports' Team approval (handled on a case-by-case basis).
7. Age overrides are permitted one week after registration opens, if roster spots are available, only for players who are one year younger than that age group (i.e., a 10-year-old can play for the 11-12 age group).
8. Age overrides are not permitted for the 6U (ages 5-6) division.
9. In the case of needing to fill the **minimum** number of participants for a team's game, the coach will be allowed to move up no more than **three** rostered players, if they meet all requirements. The participant(s) must be:
 - a. On an ActiveNet roster for the same sport and recreation center
 - b. Only one year younger than that age group (i.e., a 10-year-old can play for the 11-12 age group).
 - c. Coaches must notify and receive permission from the Youth Sports Team at least one hour prior to game time to move a player up.
 - d. This adaptation will be allowed during the regular season only.
10. Any player on a CHSAA high school basketball roster is ineligible to participate.

V. SPORT-SPECIFIC RULES

NFHS HIGH SCHOOL RULES WILL BE ENFORCED WITH THE FOLLOWING DENVER PARKS AND RECREATION MODIFICATIONS

1. **Ages 5-6 roster minimum is 4 players, maximum 8 players. Ages 7+ roster minimum is 5 players, maximum 10 players.** No players may be added after February 1, 2026.
2. Teams are allowed a maximum of 3 total players from the same outside team.
3. Teams are only allowed to participate in one Denver Youth Sports Recreational League and may not participate in other outside leagues.
4. Players will only be allowed to be on one roster per age group (i.e. a 9-year-old cannot play for more than one 9-10 basketball team).

5. **ALL PLAYERS PRESENT MUST PLAY AT LEAST TWELVE MINUTES OF THE GAME. FAILURE TO COMPLY WILL RESULT IN FORFEIT OF THE GAME.**
6. **Players can have reduced playing time or be withheld completely from any game for disciplinary or injury reasons. In this situation, the circumstance(s) must be presented to the score table, site supervisor, opposing coach, and officials prior to tipoff.**
7. All players must wear their unaltered, current season, DPR-issued uniform with athletic shorts/pants and shoes or Youth Sports approved attire.
8. A 5-minute grace period will apply to all games. A forfeit will be issued after 5 minutes. **Teams are highly encouraged to arrive 30 minutes prior to game time.** A team can start and can finish the game with four players. If the minimum number of players are present, the grace period is not in effect and the game will start as scheduled.
9. Teams will be allowed five minutes of warm-up time. Warm up time will not apply if the 5-minute grace period is in effect.
10. Halftime will be three minutes.
11. Teams will have two 30-second timeouts per half. Unused timeouts will not carry over. One timeout will be given to each team during overtime.
12. An official will penalize a team for unsportsmanlike conduct by a manager, coach, player, or spectator by issuing a technical foul and awarding the opposing team two points and possession of the ball.
13. All players must report to the scorer's table prior to entering the game.
14. Players will foul out on their 5th foul.
15. A team will reach "double bonus" free throws on the opposition's 5th team foul in each quarter.
16. Players must play half the scheduled games to be eligible for the playoffs. Absences due to injuries or disciplinary action will be reviewed by the Youth Sports Team on a case-by-case basis.
17. Games will consist of four (4) eight-minute (8:00) quarters with a running clock except the last two minutes of the fourth quarter and free throws.
18. On free throws, the clock will stop once the referee has relayed the foul to the table.
19. **Overtime - Regular Season:** Teams will designate 3 players to participate in a best-of-three free throws.
 - a. Only the players on the floor at the conclusion of regulation play will be eligible to participate.
 - b. Home team on the schedule will have the opportunity to shoot first, with teams alternating shots and shooters.
 - c. If there is no point advantage after 3 free throw attempts by each team, the game will end in a tie.

Overtime - Postseason:

First overtime will consist of one (1) two-minute (2:00) period with a running clock with stoppage only on timeouts and free throws (Rule V.18).

- a. Overtime will start with a jump ball.
- b. One timeout will be given to each team during overtime.
- c. Overtime is an extension of the second half, so all player and team fouls will carry over (this includes bonus foul shots); however, unused timeouts from the second half do not carry over.

Second overtime is best-of-three / sudden death free throws.

- a. All players will be eligible to participate.
- b. Teams will designate 3 players to participate in a best-of-three free throws, and additional shooters if needed.
- c. Home team on the schedule will have the opportunity to shoot first, with teams alternating shots and shooters.
- d. If there is no point advantage after 3 free throw attempts by each team, each team will select additional shooters until the game is decided.
- e. Teams cannot repeat shooters until all players on the team have made an attempt.

VI. DIVISIONS: 6U & 8U (5-6 & 7-8 YEAR-OLDS)

1. 6U (5-6) Division Coed, 8U (7-8) Division Boys, 8U (7-8) Division Girls
2. A team must start and can finish the game with three players (5-6) and four players (7-8).
3. All players in attendance must play in half the game (exception: discipline, injury, illness).
4. Games will consist of four (4) eight-minute (8:00) quarters. Quarters will begin with an inbounds pass from the half-court line. Determined by coaches, rotated evenly.
5. The clock will stop at 4:00 of each quarter for substitutions. Players should only be substituted at the 4:00 stoppage, or at the beginning of each quarter. Injury and illness substitutions are allowed as needed.
6. Once a team establishes control of the ball, the opposing team must immediately retreat to defense (see below).
7. Defense: Man-to-Man
 - a. **Players will defend only the player with same color wristband. "Hands up" defense only; no stealing of dribbles or passes, or blocking of shots.**
 - b. Players will be allowed to move away from their man on a loose ball, shot attempt, or rebound.
 - c. On defense, players can pick up their player at the defensive free throw line (extended).
8. One coach per team will be responsible for on-court officiating.
9. The following must be enforced from the start of the game:
 - a. Fouls, illegal defense (Rule VI.6), defense not getting back in a timely manner, traveling, double dribbling.
 - b. Coaches must blow the whistle and provide explanation of each rule violation. Two (2) warnings will be given before any rule will be enforced.
 - c. Free throws will be awarded on shooting fouls for the 8U division. Free throws will be taken from ten (10) feet. Players who are capable may step back to twelve (12) feet if desired.
10. No score or league standings will be kept in either age group.

VII. DIVISION: 10U (9-10 YEAR-OLDS)

1. Free throws will be shot from twelve (12) feet. Players who are capable may step back to fifteen (15) feet if desired.
2. During free throws, players will line up using the second, third, and fourth lane space. The first lane space, which is lined up below the block, will not be used.
3. Five (5) second lane violation on offense.
4. No full-court defense at any time.
 - A team will be allowed one warning for playing backcourt defense. Subsequent violations will result in awarding the opposing team two points and possession of the ball. This will not be considered a technical foul.
5. Mercy Rule: Takes effect when a team is ahead by 15 or more points, and is no longer in effect when the trailing team is within 10 or less points. While the mercy rule is in effect, the leading team must do the following:
 - Offense – Implement a strategy to not run up the score, such as: No fast breaks, encourage multiple passes, allow all players opportunity to shoot, etc.
 - Defense – Must play "man-to-man" defense. No double-teaming, traps, or press. Players may begin defending from the 3-point line extended. Play "hands up" defense – no stealing of passes or on the dribble.

- Failure to comply will result in a warning. Subsequent violations will result in awarding the opposing team two points and possession of the ball. This will not be considered a technical foul.
- All jump balls and quarter change possessions will be awarded to the team that is trailing.
- 4th quarter only: Clock will continue to run, even on free throws and final 2:00.

VIII. DIVISIONS: 12U, 14U & 17U (11-12, 13-14, & 15-17 YEAR-OLDS)

1. Free throws will be shot from regulation free throw line fifteen (15) feet.
2. During free throws, players will line up using the second, third, and fourth lane space. The first lane space, which is lined up below the block, will not be used.
3. Three (3) second lane violation on offense.
4. Full court defense is allowed, except when in Mercy Rule.
6. Mercy Rule: Takes effect when a team is ahead by 15 or more points, and is no longer in effect when the trailing team is within 10 or less points. While the mercy rule is in effect, the leading team must do the following:
 - Offense – Implement strategy to not run up the score, such as: No fast breaks, encourage multiple passes, allow all players opportunity to shoot, etc.
 - Defense – Must play “man-to-man” defense. No double-teaming, traps, or press. Players may begin defending from the 3-point line extended. Play “hands up” defense – no stealing of passes or on the dribble.
 - Failure to comply will result in a warning. Subsequent violations will result in awarding the opposing team two points and possession of the ball. This will not be considered a technical foul.
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