

YOUTH BASKETBALL GUIDELINES: 3rd/4th Grade



The playing guidelines below are set forth for the Brooks Family YMCA Jr. NBA Youth Basketball League.

- Each team is required to provide a scorekeeper for their team for each game.
- Prior to the start of each game, players from both teams and coaches will join the referee at mid-court to recite the Player's Creed.
- Players must wear their YMCA issued Jr. NBA jersey and non-marking sneakers to participate in games.
- Players must play only for the team they are assigned. Players that are not registered for the program cannot play or be used as a substitute for an absent player.

EQUIPMENT & COURT SPECIFICATIONS

TOPIC	RECOMMENDATION
Size of Ball	Boys and Girls size 6 (28.5")
Height of Basket	9'
Size of Court	74'x50'
Distance of 3-Point Arc	Not Applicable
Distance of Free Throw Line	14'

GAME STRUCTURE

TOPIC	RECOMMENDATION
Game Length	Four 8-minute periods
Time Between Periods	1 minute
Extra Period(s)	2 minutes
Scoring	Free throw: 1 point, all field goals: 2 points, no 3-point field goals
Timeouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">☐ Two 60-second timeouts permitted in the first half of play. Two 60-second timeouts permitted in the second half of play☐ One 60-second timeout granted for each extra period☐ Unused timeouts may not carry over to the next half or into extra periods
Start of Game Possession	The "away" team is awarded possession and starts with throw-in at half court

GAME TACTICS

TOPIC	RECOMMENDATION
Playing Time	Equal playing time in periods 1-3. Coaches discretion in the 4th period and each extra period
Set Defense Pressing	Only player-to-player defense throughout the competition
Defense	<ul style="list-style-type: none">☐ Player-to-player defense may be extended full court in the 4th period and each extra period☐ Leading team may not extend the defense over half court when leading by 25 points or more
Double-Team/Crowding	Double-team/crowding is not allowed throughout the competition
Stealing from the Dribbler	Coaches discretion throughout the competition

HIGHLIGHTED GAME PLAY RULES

TOPIC	RECOMMENDATION
Backcourt Timeline	10 seconds
Shot Clock	Not applicable
5 Seconds Closely Guarded	Only when offensive the player is holding the basketball
Clock Stoppage	On any dead ball
Length of Time for a Free-Throw	10 seconds
Number of Players Permitted on Free-Throw Lane	<ul style="list-style-type: none">☐ Offense may have 3 players on the lane, including the shooter☐ Defense may have 3 players on the lane
Substitutions	Substitutions take place at the mid-way point of each quarter
Advancement of Ball after a Timeout	Not applicable



DEFINITIONS

Player-to-Player Defense

- ▶ Each player is responsible for guarding and moving with one offensive player. This requires the defensive player to move according to the offensive player's movements with or without the ball.
- ▶ The defensive player must stay on the same side of the court as the offensive player, divided by the rim line.
- ▶ If an offensive player with the ball advances past their defensive player, another defender may rotate to guard that offensive player.

Pressing Defense: Defensive guarding, either on or off the ball, within the backcourt.

Double-Team/Crowding: Two or more defensive players guarding a single offensive player.

RATIONALE

Distance of 3-Point Arc: For 3rd/4th grade, although the 3-point arc may exist on the floor, all baskets made beyond this arc only count as two points. Therefore, the distance of the line is not applicable for these age segments. Eliminating the 3-point basket will encourage players to shoot from within a developmentally-appropriate range.

Distance of Free Throw Line: 3rd/4th graders should take free throws 14 feet from the basket to develop proper form and increase success.

Height of Basket: Utilizing a lower basket height for 3rd/4th grade allows children to develop proper shooting form and increases the opportunity for shooting success.

Scoring: All field goals for 3rd/4th graders are worth two points to encourage children to shoot within a developmentally-appropriate range. This allows for proper mechanics and form. While these age segments may attempt a shot behind the 3-point arc, any field goal made behind the arc will only count as two points.

Size of Ball: A smaller basketball for the younger age segments is advised due to the size of a child's hand as well as their developing skill level. A smaller ball allows for better control and success.

Size of Court: For 3rd/4th grade, a 74'x 50' court is more appropriate for younger children based on their relative size in space.

Start of Game Possession: For 3rd/4th grade, a coin flip will determine the team that will start with the ball to mitigate significant differences in height and coordination among children.

Alternating possession rules will then ensue throughout the game.

Timeouts: Managing the way timeouts are called allows for better game flow and decision-making by the player(s).

Double-Team/Crowding: Crowding the ball with multiple players (referred to as "double-teaming") is not allowed for 3rd/4th grade due to skill and size discrepancies among children at these ages.

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Playing Time: To ensure that all young children participating in the sport have an opportunity to experience the game, equal and fair playing time is recommended for periods 1–3, and coaches discretion in the 4th period and each extra period for 3rd/4th grade. Equal and fair playing time is encouraged throughout all segments.

Pressing Defense: For 3rd/4th grade, permitting player-to-player defense to extend full-court in the 4th and extra periods only allows players to become accustomed to full-court defense while not having to understand sophisticated zone presses. It also allows for an introduction to competitive tactics.

Set Defense: The player-to-player requirement for 3rd/4th grade encourages physical activity and movement, and promotes the development of individual skill related to guarding a player both on and off the ball.

Clock Stoppage: Fewer clock stoppages for 3rd/4th grade allows for a better game flow.

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