

nevada-utah conference sports ministry  
YOUTH BASKETBALL RULES & GUIDELINES



**MODIFIED USA YOUTH BASKETBALL GUIDELINES**

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The Rising To The Top Basketball League exists to make lifelong disciples for Christ. We utilize basketball to instill Christian character, foster hope, develop positive attitude, promote sportsmanship, and teach team work to equip youth for success in everyday life. Nevada-Utah Conference Sports Ministry has modified the youth guidelines of the USA Basketball and the NBA to provide age and developmentally appropriate rules to ensure a fun and safe environment.

**The rules and standards address four key areas:**

- Equipment & Court Specifications (*e.g., proper height of the basket, size of the ball, and court dimensions and lines*).
- Game Structure (*e.g., length of the game, scoring and timeouts*).
- Game Tactics (*e.g., equal playing time, player-to-player vs. zone defense, pressing vs. no pressing*).
- Game Play Rules (*e.g., use of a shot clock, substitutions, clock stoppage*).

The playing rules and standards are to serve as guidelines and recommendations for those coaching and officiating basketball games.

Where a specific rule or standard is not explicitly indicated, the recommendation is to follow official FIBA (International Basketball Federation) rules.

Nevada-Utah Conference Sports Ministry will utilize the playing rules and standards outlined in this document in all regular season games and tournaments.

*\*We understand that organizations and facilities may not always be able to accommodate all recommendations and that modifications will need to be made in certain instances due to practical limitations (e.g., inability to raise or lower the height of a basket, re-draw court lines, or not having a shot clock).*

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## EQUIPMENT & COURT SPECIFICATIONS

PLAYING SEGMENT	SIZE OF BALL	HEIGHT OF BASKET	SIZE OF COURT	DISTANCE OF 3-POINT ARC	DISTANCE OF FREE-THROW LINE
<b>AGES 6 -9</b>	Females and Males size 5 (27.5")	8'	50'x42'	Not applicable	14'
<b>AGES 10 -13</b>	Females and Males size 6 (28.5")	9'	50'x42' or 94'x50'	19'9"	15'
<b>AGES 14 -18</b>	Females size 6 (28.5") Males size 7 (29.5")	10'	94'x50'	22'2" or the next available line under 22'2"	15'
<b>AGES 18 - 30</b>	Females Size 6 (28.5") Males Size 7 (29.5")	10'	94'x50'	22'2" or the next available line under 22'2"	15'

## EQUIPMENT & COURT SPECIFICATIONS

**Distance of 3-Point Arc:** For 6-9-year olds, 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 at this age segment will encourage players to shoot from within a developmentally-appropriate range. For 10-13-year olds, a 19'9" arc is recommended. For 14-18-year olds, a 22'2" arc is preferred, but if this line is not on a court the next available line under 22'2" is recommended.

**Distance of Free Throw Line:** 6-9-year-olds should take free throws 14 feet from the basket to develop proper form and increase success.

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**Height of Basket:** Utilizing a lower basket height for 6-9 and 10-13-year-olds allows children to develop proper shooting form and increases the opportunity for shooting success.

**Scoring:** All field goals for 6-9-year-olds 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 6-9-year-olds, a 50'x 42' court is contemplated to be a cross-court game on a full-sized basketball court. This dimension is more appropriate for younger children based on their relative size in space.

## STRUCTURE

### AGES 6-9

- **GAME LENGTH:** Four 6-minute periods
- **TIME BETWEEN PERIODS:** 1 minute with a halftime intermission of 8 minutes observed between the second and third quarters.
- **EXTRA PERIODS:** 2 minutes
- **SCORING:**
  - Free throw: 1 point
  - All field goals: 2 points
  - No 3-point field goals
- **TIME OUTS:**
  - Two 60-second timeouts permitted in the first half of play. Two 60-second timeouts permitted in the second half of play

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- 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:** Coin flip. Team awarded possession starts with throw-in at half court

**AGES 10-13**

- **GAME LENGTH:** Four 8-minute periods
- **TIME BETWEEN PERIODS:** 1 minute with a halftime intermission of 8 minutes observed between the second and third quarters.
- **EXTRA PERIODS:** 4 minutes
- **SCORING:**
  - Free throw: 1 point
  - All field goals: 2 points
  - Field goal outside of 3-point arc: 3 points
- **TIME OUTS:**
  - Two 60-second timeouts permitted in the first half of play. Three 60-second timeouts permitted in the second half of play
  - Maximum of 2 timeouts permitted in the final 2 minutes of the 4th period
  - 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:** Jump ball

**AGES 14-18**

- **GAME LENGTH:** Four 10-minute periods
- **TIME BETWEEN PERIODS:** 2 minutes with a halftime intermission of 10 minutes observed between the second and third quarters.
- **EXTRA PERIODS:** 5 minutes

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- **SCORING:**
  - Free throw: 1 point
  - All field goals: 2 points
  - Field goal outside of 3-point arc: 3 points
- **TIME OUTS:**
  - Two 60-second timeouts permitted in the first half of play.  
Three 60-second timeouts permitted in the second half of play
  - Maximum of 2 timeouts permitted in the final 2 minutes of the 4th period
  - 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:** Jump ball

**AGES 18-30**

- **GAME LENGTH:** Four 10-minute periods
- **TIME BETWEEN PERIODS:** 2 minutes with a halftime intermission of 10 minutes observed between the second and third quarters.
- **EXTRA PERIODS:** 5 minutes
- **SCORING:**
  - Free throw: 1 point
  - All field goals: 2 points
  - Field goal outside of 3-point arc: 3 points
- **TIME OUTS:**
  - Two 60-second timeouts permitted in the first half of play.  
Three 60-second timeouts permitted in the second half of play
  - Maximum of 2 timeouts permitted in the final 2 minutes of the 4th period
  - 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:** Jump ball

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### RATIONALE

**Start of Game Possession:** For 6-9-year-olds, 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 players.

### GAME TACTICS

<b>PLAYING SEGMENT</b>	<b>PLAYING TIME</b>	<b>SET DEFENSE</b>	<b>PRESSING DEFENSE</b>	<b>DOUBLE-TEAM /CROWDING</b>	<b>STEALING FROM THE DRIBBLER</b>
<b>AGES 6-9</b>	Equal playing time	Only player-to- player defense throughout the games	Pressing is not allowed throughout the games	Double-team / crowding is not allowed throughout the games	Stealing from a dribbler is not allowed throughout the games
<b>AGES 10-13</b>	Equal playing time in periods 1-3. Coaches discretion in the 4th period and each extra period	All allowed throughout the competition at coach's discretion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pressing allowed throughout the competition</li> <li>• Leading team may not press when leading by 20 points or more</li> </ul>	Allowed throughout the competition at coach's discretion	Coach's discretion throughout the competition
<b>AGES 14-18</b>	Equal playing time in periods 1-3. Coaches discretion in the 4th period and	All allowed throughout the competition at coach's discretion	Pressing allowed throughout the competition	Allowed throughout the competition at coach's discretion	Coach's discretion throughout the competition

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	each extra period				
<b>AGES 18-30</b>	Coach's discretion throughout the competition	All allowed throughout the competition at coach's discretion	Pressing allowed throughout the competition	Allowed throughout the competition at coach's discretion	Coach's discretion throughout the competition

## 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

**Double-Team/Crowding:** Crowding the ball with multiple players (referred to as "double-teaming") is not allowed for 6-9-year-olds due to skill and



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size discrepancies among children at these ages. Crowding is allowed for 10-13-year-olds and older to remain consistent with pressing defense standards.

**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 6-9-year-olds. For 10-13-year-olds and 14-18-year olds, equal playing time is recommended for periods 1-3, while allowing coaches discretion in the 4th and extra periods. Equal and fair playing time is encouraged throughout all segments.

**Pressing Defense:** Pressing defense is prohibited for 6-9-year-olds to help children develop principles of movement with and without the ball in a half-court setting.

**Set Defense:** The player-to-player requirement for 6-9-year-olds encourages physical activity and movement and promotes the development of individual skill related to guarding a player both on and off the ball.

<b>PLAYING SEGMENT</b>	<b>BACKCOURT TIMELINE</b>	<b>SHOT CLOCK</b>	<b>5 SECONDS CLOSELY GUARDED</b>	<b>CLOCK STOPPAGE</b>
<b>AGES 6-9</b>	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	On any dead ball
<b>AGES 12-14</b>	10 seconds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 seconds</li> <li>• Full 30 second reset on offensive and defensive rebounds</li> <li>• Full 30 second reset on any foul</li> </ul>	Only when the offensive player is holding the basketball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On any dead ball</li> <li>• After a made field goal in the last 2 minutes of the 4th period and in each extra period</li> </ul>

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<p><b>AGES 14-18</b></p>	<p>8 seconds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24 seconds</li> <li>• 14 second reset for offensive rebound</li> <li>• Full 24 second reset for fouls committed in the backcourt</li> <li>• If a foul is committed in the frontcourt and the shot clock is above 14 seconds, there will be no reset and the clock will continue from the time it was stopped</li> <li>• If a foul is committed in the frontcourt and the shot clock is under 14 seconds, it shall be reset to 14 seconds</li> </ul>	<p>Only when the offensive player is holding the basketball</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On any dead ball</li> <li>• After a made field goal in the last 2 minutes of the 4th period and in each extra period</li> </ul>
<p><b>AGES 18-30</b></p>	<p>8 seconds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24 seconds</li> <li>• 14 second reset for offensive rebound</li> <li>• Full 24 second reset for fouls committed in the backcourt</li> <li>• If a foul is committed in the frontcourt and the shot clock is above 14 seconds, there will be no reset and the clock will</li> </ul>	<p>Only when the offensive player is holding the basketball</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On any dead ball</li> <li>• After a made field goal in the last 2 minutes of the 4th period and in each extra period</li> </ul>

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		continue from the time it was stopped • If a foul is committed in the frontcourt and the shot clock is under 14 seconds, it shall be reset to 14 seconds		
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## RATIONALE

**Backcourt Timeline:** Not having a timeline violation for 6-9-year-olds allows coaches to communicate to players before they reach half court. This assists coaches in teaching children, particularly for those first learning the game. The progression to 10 seconds for 10-13-year-olds, and later to eight seconds for ages 14-18 and ages 18-30, allows the game to flow while developing skills such as ball-handling, passing and decision-making.

**Clock Stoppage:** Stopping the clock following a made basket within the last two minutes of the fourth period and any extra periods for 10-13-year-olds, 14-18-year-olds, and 18-30-year olds allows for additional strategic decision-making. Fewer clock stoppages for 6-9-year-olds allows for a better game flow.

**Shot Clock:** The 30-second shot clock for 10-13-year-olds, along with the 24-second shot clock for ages 14-18 and 18-30, allows for more possessions for each team, better game flow and places decision-making elements in the hands of players.

**Advancement of the Ball after a Timeout:** For 6-9-year-olds, the focus is on development over strategy. Therefore, there is no pressing defense at this level, and the ball will not automatically advance after a timeout.

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HIGHLIGHTED GAME PLAY RULES CONTINUED

PLAYING SEGMENT	LENGTH OF TIME FOR A FREE THROW	NUMBER OF PLAYERS PERMITTED ON FREE-THROW LINE	SUBSTITUTIONS	ADVANCEMENT OF BALL AFTER A TIME OUT
<b>AGES 6-9</b>	10 seconds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offense may have 3 players on the lane, including the shooter</li> <li>• Defense may have 3 players on the lane</li> </ul>	Either team may substitute when the clock is stopped	Not applicable
<b>AGES 10-13</b>	10 seconds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offense may have 3 players on the lane, including the shooter</li> <li>• Defense may have 3 players on the lane</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Either team may substitute on any dead ball</li> <li>• Either team may substitute before the first free throw attempt or after the last free throw if made</li> <li>• A non-scoring team may substitute after any field goal scored in the last 2 minutes of the 4th period and each extra period. If the non-scoring team substitutes, the scoring team may also substitute</li> </ul>	In the last 2 minutes of the 4th period and each extra period following a time out, the ball will be inbounded from the offensive team's frontcourt opposite the scorer's table
<b>AGES 14-18</b>	5 seconds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offense may have 3 players on the lane, including the shooter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Either team may substitute on any dead ball</li> <li>• Either team may substitute before</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the last 2 minutes of the 4th period and each extra period following a time</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defense may have 3 players on the lane</li> </ul>	<p>the first free throw attempt or after the last free throw if made</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A non-scoring team may substitute after any field goal scored in the last 2 minutes of the 4th period and each extra period. If the non-scoring team substitutes, the scoring team may also substitute</li> </ul>	<p>out, the ball will be inbounded from the offensive team's frontcourt opposite the scorer's table</p>
<b>AGES 18-30</b>	5 seconds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offense may have 3 players on the lane, including the shooter</li> <li>• Defense may have 3 players on the lane</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Either team may substitute on any dead ball</li> <li>• Either team may substitute before the first free throw attempt or after the last free throw if made</li> <li>• A non-scoring team may substitute after any field goal scored in the last 2 minutes of the 4th period and each extra period. If the non-scoring team substitutes, the scoring team may also substitute</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the last 2 minutes of the 4th period and each extra period following a time out, the ball will be inbounded from the offensive team's frontcourt opposite the scorer's table</li> </ul>

**RATIONALE**

**Advancement of the Ball after a Timeout:** For 6-9-year-olds, the focus is on development over strategy. Therefore, there is no pressing defense at this level, and the ball will not automatically advance after a timeout.