

JUNIOR COMET SPORTS

Basketball Rules - All Levels combined

----- GENERAL RULES -----

Updated 1-4-2026

ABUSIVE LANGUAGE

Player or coach: automatic technical foul. Spectator: will be asked to leave the gym or the game will be ended. 2nd violation: For a player, a technical foul + removal from the game. For a coach, a technical foul + they must leave the gym.

BASKETBALL SIZE - **Level 1 & 2:** Junior size (27.5") **Level 3:** Intermediate size (28.5")

BASKET HEIGHT - **Level 1:** @ 8' / **Level 2:** @ 9' / **Level 3:** @ 10'.

The Boys program may choose to use - 8.5', 9.25' & 10', respectively.

CHEER - Team cheer and shaking of hands is expected of both teams following the game.

COACHING AREA

Coaches are expected to remain in the coaching area during the progress of the game. This is the area directly in front of their team seating area and to their side of ½ court, but not out on the court, except during a dead ball (when speaking with a referee) or during a time out.

HALF TIME - Up to the discretion of the Board Member, generally 1 to 5 minutes.

INJURY

If a player must leave the game due to injury, they should be returned to the game as soon as possible in that quarter. If unable to return it still counts towards their playing time.

JEWELRY

No jewelry deemed hazardous to any player shall be worn during the game. This includes, but is not limited to; earrings, necklaces, bracelets, rings, hair retainers, etc., and especially metal items. New-ly pierced ears must be taped over or the studs removed temporarily.

LENGTH OF GAME – Four eight minute quarters, running time.

Exceptions: See stopping the clock & substitutions.

OVERTIME & TIE GAMES

Level 1 & 2: No overtime, tie games are fine.

Level 3: After a 90 second break following regulation play, a jump ball will start a 2-minute overtime. Each team will have 1-timeout during overtime. Any 5 players may be chosen to play in the overtime. A substitution may only be made in case of injury and the injured player may not return. At the end of two minutes if the score is still tied, it remains a TIE GAME.

**Possibly consider having opposing coaches select the (5) to play?*

PLAYERS - 5 on 5 in all levels.

1. A game may begin or continue with 4 players.

2. Less than 4 is a forfeit.

3. A player may be used from the opponent if it can be setup by the Bd Mbr to avoid a forfeit.

PLAYING TIME

This is considered of utmost importance in our Jr. Comet programs. In any one game players should ALL be within one quarter of each other. A player receiving an extra quarter of playing time in a game should not play an extra quarter again until ALL other players have reached the same number of total quarters. Playing time for all players should be within one quarter of each other by seasons end.

REDUCED PLAYING TIME

If a team is reducing a players playing time, due to disciplinary action, they must inform the Board Member prior to the start of the game. Coaches are not required to make up playing time for players who miss a game. It is counted as if they were in attendance and played the maximum quarters of anyone on their team for that game.

REMOVAL

Any Person may be removed for an unsportsmanlike act. Two technical fouls and a player is removed from the game. Any player or coach removed may participate in the next game.

See Also: Abusive Language, Unsportsmanlike Conduct, Fouling Out, & Technical Foul.

SCORING GAMES

Level 1: No score will be kept.

Level 2: The score is reset to zero at the end of each quarter.

Level 3: A full game score will be kept. Exception: If a team is ahead by 10 or more at ½ time the score will be reset to 0-0 to start the 2nd half.

STOPPING THE CLOCK

The clock is stopped during game play, only for the following reasons:

1. For team Time-Outs.
2. On shooting fouls; when lining players up for a free throw.
3. Technical Fouls.
4. When deemed necessary by a Referee or Board Member.

On free throws the clock restarts when the referee hands the ball to the shooter.

SUBSTITUTIONS

Are made only at the quarters. Exceptions: A team with more than 10 players is allowed to sub at mid-quarter, but this must be determined prior to the start of the game. Should a player leave the game due to injury or foul out a substitute is allowed. The Board Member will stop the clock. All players will freeze in their positions on the court until the substitution is completed and both teams know who is guarding whom. The clock then restarts. **See also:** "Temporary Substitution" in playing rules.

TIME OUTS

2 time outs/half (**30 seconds - not savable / Time outs begins when all players are with their coaches**). Time Outs may be called by a player on the court or by a coach on the bench. A team must have possession (or a dead ball situation) to call timeout.

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

A player, coach or spectator may be immediately be removed (a player from the game, Coach or Spectator from the gym) by the Referee or Board Member for unsportsmanlike conduct.

See Also: Abusive Language!

VIOLATION TALLY

A "Game Day Tally" will be kept at the scorer's table for the purpose of helping the Referee keep track of fouls, swarming, key violations, timeouts and playing time. A board member or parent must do this.

----- PLAYING RULES -----

ALLOWED DEFENSE - Man to Man ONLY. NO zone defense is allowed.

COLLAPSING DEFENSE - *Level 1 & 2*

Not allowed. This occurs when 1 or more defensive players is sagging towards the basket away from their offensive counterpart, and the ball is outside the key. **Penalty:** Whistle the play dead, warn the offending player & team, notify the Scorer, have them Return to arms distance. Hand the ball back to the offense in the neutral zone, resume play on referee's command. On the 3rd and successive violations a technical foul results.

DEFENDER RULES - All levels play Man to Man, NO zones or pressing.

Level 1:

1. No collapsing away from the offensive player being guarded unless the ball is in the key.
2. Swarming is called only outside the key.

Level 2:

No defender is required to go beyond the 3-pt line if the person being guarded is outside that line.

1. When an offensive player w/o the ball comes inside the 3-pt arc the defender should be w/in 5ft.
2. When the player w/the ball comes inside the 3-pt arc the defender must try to stay w/in 3ft.
3. Swarming (double teaming) is called only outside the key.

Level 3:

Back Side Defense: IS allowed.

1. When the ball moves to the side court area (approx. at or below the free throw line) the defenders on the back side (opposite side of the court) may move to the near edge of the key on their side .
2. If/when the ball moves back towards top/center (at or above the top arc of the key) the defenders on the back side must move back to w/in 5ft of their opponent.

Help Side Defense: IS allowed.

1. When the ball is dribbled toward the middle or side, any near defender (1) may leave their player to help stop the offensive penetration.
2. When the dribble ceases (creating a STATIC ball handler) the 2nd defender must move back to their offensive player. Reaction time is allowed for this to happen. Doubling teaming a static ball handler is not allowed. The referee should call (Back Off) and the 2nd defender must react back to their player.

Guarding Distances:

1. No defender is required to go beyond the 3-pt line if the person being guarded is outside that line.
2. When an offensive player **w/o the ball** comes inside the 3-pt arc the defender should be w/in 5ft.
3. When the player **w/the ball** comes inside the 3-pt arc the defender must try to stay w/in 3ft.

Swarming:

Double or triple teaming, etc a static ball handler. Is called only outside the key, never when the ball or player with the ball is in the key.

DEFENSIVE PRESSURE - *Level 3:*

1. The offense must be allowed to cross the ½ court line.
2. Defenders need to be in proximity of who they're guarding and move with them when they move.
3. When the ball is in the key (not the player), there are NO guarding rules, 5 on 1 is Okay.

Level 3: Penalty: Whistle the play dead, warn the offending player & team, notify the Scorer, have them Return to proximity distance. The offense in-bounds the ball under their basket.

DRIBBLING VIOLATIONS

Level 1:

For the season traveling, double dribble, palming the ball, and 2-handed dribbling infractions will be whistled and play stopped. The violation will be explained to the player. The offense retains the ball with another restart in the neutral zone when both teams are ready for play. Beginning with the 3rd game, dribbling violations require the offender to make a pass to a teammate while facing away from the basket.

Level 2:

For the first 2 games, traveling, double dribble, palming the ball, and 2-handed dribbling infractions will be whistled and play stopped. The violation will be explained to the player. The offense retains the ball with another restart in the neutral zone when both teams are ready for play. Beginning with the 3rd game, dribbling violations become turnovers.

Level 3: Dribbling violations **are immediate turnovers** the whole season.

FAST BREAK

Level 1 & 2: Only loose balls & steals are open to a fast break. Defenders must retreat behind the NZ before defense can be re-established. Loose balls after steals are live.

Level 3: Loose balls, steals & REBOUNDS are open to a fast break. No outlet pass is required. Opposing players must retreat behind ½ court before defense can be re-established. Loose balls after steals are live and open to a fast break, but the defense cannot remain in back court waiting for a loose ball. If the defense is retreating and a loose ball occurs, it is anyone's ball.

FOULS & FOULING OUT

Level 1; Fouls are recorded on the Game Tally for each player. No player fouls out.

Level 2; Fouls are recorded on the Game Tally for each player. A player can foul out in either half with 3 fouls, but may play in the 2nd half if they foul out in the 1st half.

Level 3; Players are removed from the game on their 5th personal foul.

FREE PLAY - Level 1 & 2 only:

There are no steals or loose ball pickups by the defense when the ball is the Neutral Zone the first time. (see the court diagram, page 8e) **Penalty:** Whistle the play dead. The referee secures the ball. Have the defender(s) retreat out of the zone. Hand the ball back to the offense in the NZ and call - Play Ball.

FREE THROW BONUS - automatic 1pt, shoot for 2nd pt. - known as a 1&1 situation

Level 1 & 2: 5 team fouls puts a team in a bonus situation.

Level 3: 7 team fouls puts a team in a bonus situation.

FREE THROW DISTANCES

Level 1: Shoot from 11' line or further, w/no line **or** lane violations called.

Level 2: Shoot from 13' line or further, w/no line violation, but w/lane violations called.

Level 3: Shoot from regulation 15' w/both line and lane violations called.

FREE THROW SCORING - All Levels.

For all fouls resulting in a free throw, players will shoot 1-shot.

Shot Foul: Automatic - 1 team point, shoot for possible 2nd pt, w/live rebound.

1-1 Bonus: Automatic - 1 team point, shoot for possible 2nd pt, w/live rebound.

3-Pt Foul: Automatic - 2 team points, shoot for possible 3rd pt, w/live rebound.

Technical: Automatic - 1 team point, shoot for possible 2nd pt. - (**Offense retains possession**)

GUARDING DISTANCE

Level 1 & 2 only: The defensive player must remain within arms length of the offensive player at all times (approx. 3-Ft +/-) Exceptions:

1. When the offensive player is outside the regulation 3-Pt line (20'), some slack is allowed (6-Ft +/-).
2. When the offensive player is in the neutral zone for the first time the defensive player must be outside of the Neutral Zone but within arms reach of it.

Level 3: See - **DEFENDER RULES & DEFENSIVE PRESSURE**

INBOUNDS PASSES

Level 1: remind kids the whole season, but should be made in 5 seconds.

Level 2: should be made in 5 seconds - the first 2 games, blow whistle, remind players and coaches of the rule at each infraction, from the 3rd game on, it is an immediate turnover.

Level 3: Must be made in 5 seconds. After 5 seconds, it's a turnover.

INBOUNDS PLAY

Level 1: An inbounds pass made successfully into the NZ will result in a free play. No defender may be in the NZ during the inbounds attempt. The inbounds pass may not be intercepted or stolen once it enters the NZ unless touched by an offensive player before entering the zone. **Result:** Whistle the play dead, hand the ball back to the offense in the NZ. **call - Play Ball.**

Level 2: The defense may play the entire front-court on an inbounds pass. The ball may be passed into the back-court without jeopardy of being stolen. A new free start begins when the player with the ball crosses ½ court into the NZ.

Level 3: A pass into back court is NOT defensible. The defense may play the entire front court on an inbounds pass. **Proximity** still applies!

JUMP BALLS

Level 1 & 2: Jump to start each quarter. Then, alternating possessions the remainder of the quarter.

Level 3: Jump at the start of the game. Then, alternating possessions the remainder of the game.

KEY VIOLATIONS - assessed at 5 seconds in level 1 & 2.

Level 1: Remind them the whole season to move out of the Key.

Level 2: Two warnings **per game**. Whistle play dead, remind the offending team of the violation. Then, give the ball back in the neutral zone & restart. **After two warnings it is a turnover.**

Level 3: Regulation 3-Second call, and an immediate turnover.

LOOSE BALLS - Loose balls are live and either team may gain possession, but the defense cannot remain in back court waiting for a loose ball. If the defense is retreating and a loose ball occurs, it is anyone's ball.

NEUTRAL ZONE

1. This is a free start area for the offense (no defensive pressure). It extends from ½ court 10' to 15' towards their basket and is designated by a dashed line on the court.

2. Defensive player(s) whose opponent(s) are in the NZ for the 1st time, need to be within arms reach of the Neutral Zone.

3. Once the offense has caused the ball to break the plane of the NZ, the whole court is open.

Level 1: There is no time limit to move forward out of the zone & the defense must to stay behind the NZ until the ball or offensive player with the ball crosses the line the first time.

Level 2: There is **a time limit** for exiting the NZ. The time limit applies BOTH to getting across the ½ court line and getting a play started. A visual hand count (of 10 seconds) by the referee will be made. When the count ends, the referee will raise a hand above their head. This signal allows defender(s) to enter the NZ and apply pressure.

NEUTRAL ZONE - continued

Level 3: There is **NO** neutral zone and defensive pressure is allowed at all times. Defense may start as soon as the player with the ball crosses half court. **The offense must be allowed to cross the ½ court line.**

OUTLET PASS

Level 1 & 2: After an attempted shot by the offense (the ball does not have to hit the rim or backboard) and the defense gains control of the rebound, there must be an outlet pass. That pass must be completed prior to ½ court. No FB or long bomb passes until after a successful outlet pass.

Penalty: Whistle the play dead, the Referee takes control of the ball and instructs the defense to get behind the NZ line. The ref then hands the ball back to the offense behind the ½ court line, and calls - **Play Ball**. If the outlet pass is poorly thrown, thus becoming a loose ball, either team may gain control. The defense may not stand and wait for a poorly thrown ball, they must be in the process of retreating back to play defense.

Level 3: ***No outlet pass is required.***

OVER & BACK

An offensive player with the ball is considered to be in front-court when both of their feet and the ball have made contact with the floor in the front-court. Thereafter, over and back occurs in the following situations:

1. When an offensive player with the ball steps on or over the ½ court line or bounces the ball on or beyond the ½ court line.
2. When the offensive team loses control of the ball and it goes into back-court they should try regain possession in back-court. (Even though the ref will blow their whistle in this situation and the defense will get the ball out of bounds, it is a good idea for the offense to grab and control the ball. Otherwise, the defense is allowed to take the ball and run, which could result in an easy basket)
3. It is not over & back if a defensive player touched the ball before it went into back-court. It is now considered a loose ball

Level 1: This rule is not enforced.

Level 2: For the first two games, whistle the play dead, explain the rule to the teams and restart across ½ court. Beginning with the 3rd game this becomes an immediate turnover.

Level 3: This is an immediate turnover.

OVERTIME & TIE GAMES

Level 2: No overtime - Tie games are fine.

Level 3: After a 90 second break following regulation play, a jump ball will start a 2-minute overtime. Each team will have 1-timeout during overtime. Any 5 players may be chosen to play in the overtime. A substitution may only be made in case of injury (the clock stops to sub) and the injured player may not return. At the end of two minutes if the score is still tied, it remains a TIE GAME.

PRESSING

Level 1 & 2: Not allowed. No full or ½ court press.

Level 3:

1. Pressing will be allowed **ONLY if** both coaches agree prior to the start of the game.
This decision must be made in the presence of the Board Member.
2. A team may press the last 2 min of each 1/2.
3. A team may not press if they are ahead by **(5)** or more points.
4. Guarding must remain **one on one** - no double teaming!

REBOUND PRESSURE

On a defensive rebound once control of the ball is established (2 hands on the ball or dribble started) backcourt pressure stops and the defense must retreat to the opposite end of the court.

REBOUND PRESSURE - Penalty:

If the defense steals the ball, whistle the play dead and have the defense retreat, then inbound the ball near the point of the steal.

SCREENS - Definition of a legal screen.

1. The offensive player must remain stationary with their hands together below their waist or across the chest, until the their offensive counterpart goes past them.
2. They should either be positioned to the side, at an angle to the side or one step back, if straight behind the defensive player.

It is an offensive foul when the person setting the screen:

1. Jars the defender.
2. Impedes the defender by moving with that person.
3. Extends their arms, thus blocking the defenders movement.

STEALS - see Fast Break & Loose Balls!

SWARMING – *this is called only when the ball is outside of the key.*

Any time there is more than one defensive player within arms reach of a ball handler and there is no 2nd offensive player also within reach of the ball (3' approx). This is true for all multiple player situations. **Penalty:** Whistle the play dead, verbally warn the offending team and notify the Scorer. On the 3rd guarding violation in a game a Technical Foul will result.

SWITCHING - is allowed - *Added definitions*

This is when two defenders change the players they are guarding in the *middle* of an offensive play.

The word "middle" is key when associated with Screening!

1. Beginning; is when player-1 moves toward teammate-2 for possibly setting a screen.
2. Middle; is when player-1 actually sets a screen.
3. End; is where player-2 moves around the screen and the "switch" occurs.

The defender must move with the person heading to set a screen. If the defender does not follow the person setting the screen, it is an illegal defense (technically a ZONE).

4. Swarming could be called if switching is not done properly.

TECHNICAL FOUL* - The clock is stopped: *see Free Throw scoring.*

1. Referees should call an immediate technical foul any time a player talks back, gives an obscene gesture, uses foul language OR delays the game by arguing a call.
2. All players line up near ½ court during the shot.
3. This is not a time out and all players must remain on the floor.
4. One player may visit with their respective coach but must remain on the court.
5. Time resumes when the ball in-bounded by the shooting team at ½ court.

TEMPORARY SUBSTITUTION - *In Level 3 only*

The purpose of this rule is for "**instructional purposes only**", e.i. explaining (quickly) to a player what they need to do differently on the court.

1. The substitution may be made during any dead ball situation.
2. The player is "**required**" to re-enter at the earliest possible situation (next dead ball or made basket).
3. To enter OR re-enter the player checks in at the scorer's table.

The Scorer will buzz them in at the next opportunity (dead ball or made basket).

TEN SECOND VIOLATION

The ball must be advanced past the half court line within 10 seconds after rebounds, steals, turnovers and inbounds passes after opponents basket, etc. If time expires, the ball goes to the opposing team out of bounds at half court.

Level 1: This rule is not enforced.

Level 2: For the first two games, whistle the play dead, explain the rule to the teams and restart in front court. Beginning with the 3rd game this becomes an immediate turnover.

Level 3: This is an immediate turnover.

TRAPPING - DELETED RULE:

You may leave your player at anytime to help out on the ball (2 player traps, MAX). You may double-team a player dribbling the ball. Once that player becomes a static ball handler (a person who has stopped dribbling), double-teaming is NOT allowed. When observed, the referee should loudly call BACK-OFF, the 2nd defender is allowed reaction time to return to the person they were guarding.

TURNOVERS

Level 3: Immediate turnovers occur on the following offensive infractions.

OFFENSIVE INFRACTIONS - e.g.

- 1 - traveling
- 2 - double dribble
- 3 - palming the ball
- 4 - charging / also a foul
- 5 - 5 seconds in the key (3-Sec Lvl 3)
- 6 - illegal screen / also a foul

DEFENSIVE FOULS - e.g.

- 1 - shooting fouls
- 2 - reaching in contact
- 3 - elbowing
- 4 - shoving
- 5 - over the back
- 6 - tripping

Level 2: Warnings are given for the first two games for these violations only - (**1, 2 & 3 above**).

Level 1: No turnovers for dribbling violations for the first two games. Whistle the play dead and remind the player & restart with a dribble. Beginning with the 3rd game whistle the play dead, referee controls the ball, requires the player to face away from the basket, then instruct the player to attempt to make a pass to continue play. ***The pass is a live ball!***

ZONE DEFENSE - Not allowed at any Level.

This occurs when 1 or more players on defense inside the 3- point line are sagging way off their player and makes no attempt to guard or stay with their offensive counterpart (proximity) and are basically protecting the area close to the key.

Penalty: - **at all levels**

1. Whistle the play dead.
2. Warn the offending team.
3. Notify the scorer.
4. The offense in-bounds the ball under their basket.

NOTE: Defensive guarding penalties are grouped together and are cumulative in their enforcement. **On the 3rd and successive violations a Technical Foul results.**