



# 2025-26 Youth jr.nba Basketball Rule Book and Coaching Manual

[www.teamsideline.com/lincolnne](http://www.teamsideline.com/lincolnne)

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## I Game

1. At the start of each game, captains from both teams meet at midcourt for the coin toss to determine who starts with the ball. The visiting team calls the toss.
2. The winner of the coin toss gets the choice as whether to receive the ball or to start play on defense. The loser of the coin toss chooses the basket they wish to defend. **Teams may NOT choose to defer their choice to the second half.**



3. The team awarded possession will start with a throw-in at midcourt.

4. The ball is moved down the court by the offense toward the basket by passing or dribbling. The team with the ball is called the offense. The team without the ball is called the defense.



5. The offense tries to shoot the ball into the basket, thus scoring points.
6. The defense tries to steal the ball, contest shots, deflect passes, and garner rebounds.
7. When a team makes a basket, they score two (2) points and the ball goes over to the other team.
8. Teams change sides after the first half.

## II Terminology

<b>Offense</b>	The team with possession of the ball.
<b>Defense</b>	The team opposing the offense to prevent it from scoring a basket.
<b>Whistle</b>	Sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for a timeout, halftime, or the end of the game.
<b>Charging</b>	An offensive foul that is committed when a player pushes or runs over a defensive player. The ball is given to the team that the foul was committed upon.
<b>Blocking</b>	Blocking is legal personal contact resulting from a defender not establishing position in time to prevent an opponent's drive to the basket.
<b>Flagrant Foul</b>	Violent contact with an opponent. This includes hitting, kicking, and punching. This type of foul results in free throws plus the offense retaining possession of the ball after the free throws.
<b>Intentional Foul</b>	When a player makes physical contact with another player with no reasonable effort to steal the ball. It is a judgement call for the officials.
<b>Technical Foul</b>	Either a player or a coach can commit this type of foul. It does not involve player contact or the ball but is instead about the "manners" of the game. Foul language, obscenity, obscene gestures, and even arguing can be considered a technical foul.
<b>Walking/Traveling</b>	Taking more than "a step and a half" without dribbling the ball is traveling. Moving the pivot foot once the player has stopped dribbling is traveling.
<b>Carrying/Palming</b>	When a player dribbles the ball with his hand too far to the side of or, sometimes, even under the ball.
<b>Double Dribble</b>	Dribbling the ball with both hands on the ball at the same time or picking up the dribble and then dribbling again is a double dribble.
<b>Held Ball</b>	Occasionally, two (2) or more opposing players will gain possession of the ball at the same time. In order to avoid a prolonged and/or violent tussle, the referee stops the action and awards the ball to one team or the other on a rotating basis.
<b>Goaltending</b>	If a defensive player interferes with a shot while it's on the way down toward the basket, while it's on the way up toward the basket after touching the backboard, or while it's in the cylinder above the rim, it's goaltending and the shot counts. If committed by an offensive player, it's a violation and the ball is awarded to the opposing team for a free throw.
<b>Backcourt Violation</b>	Once the offense has brought the ball across the mid-court line, they cannot go back across the line during possession. If they do, the ball is awarded to the other team to pass inbounds.
<b>Time Restrictions</b>	A player passing the ball inbounds has five (5) seconds to pass the ball. If he does not, then the ball is awarded to the other team. Other time restrictions include the rule that a player cannot have the ball for more than five (5) seconds while being closely guarded.
<b>Illegal Pick / Screen</b>	When an offensive player is moving. When an offensive player sticks out a limb and makes physical contact with a defender in an attempt to block the path of the defender.

### III Eligibility

1. All players must register with Lincoln Parks and Recreation either online at [www.teamsideline.com/lincolnne](http://www.teamsideline.com/lincolnne) or submit a registration/waiver form signed by a legal guardian or parent.
2. Players may play up **one (1)** grade with parental permission. **Players may NOT play down a grade.**

### IV Equipment

1. The league provides each player with an official jr.nba team jersey. **Official jr.nba jerseys must be worn during play.** Teams will use game basketballs provided by Lincoln Parks and Recreation.
  - a. Kindergarten-3<sup>rd</sup> grade will use the size 5 (27.5") ball. 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grades will use the size 6 (28.5") ball.



2. Players must wear shoes. Gym shoes and court shoes/tennis shoes are permissible.
3. Braces with exposed metals are NOT allowed.
4. Players must remove all exposed jewelry, hats, do-rags, or any item deemed dangerous by the referees. **The referee's ruling on jewelry is final.** Medical Alert bracelets or necklaces are not considered jewelry but, if worn, must be taped to the body.
5. It is recommended players wear shorts or pants that do not have pockets. Shorts or pants with belt loops or pockets must be taped. Games will NOT be delayed for a player to tape up pockets.



## V Courts

1. The height of the basket shall be determined by the age division:  
 K-1<sup>st</sup> grades: 8-foot baskets  
 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> grades: 9-foot baskets  
 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grades: 10-foot baskets

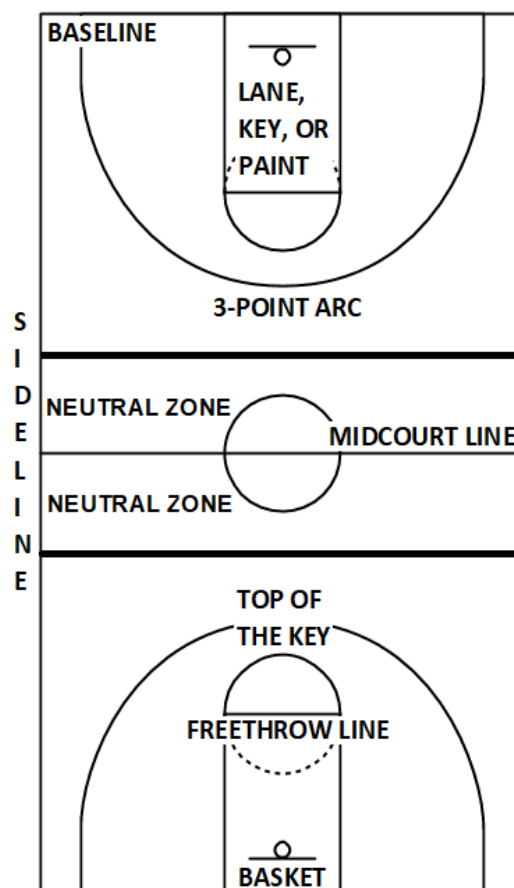
2. Three points will be awarded for a shot made from outside the 3-point arc for the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade divisions. All field goals for lower age divisions are worth two (2) points. **NOTE: Elimination of the 3-point shot in lower age divisions encourages children to shoot within a developmentally appropriate range.**

3. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.

4. **Neutral Zone:** The Neutral Zone is the area between the midcourt line and the 10' volleyball line in the front (offensive) court.

The defense is not permitted into the neutral zone. The offense is given five (5) seconds to exit or run a play out of the neutral zone. Once the ball crosses the 10' volleyball line the defense can half-court press. **NOTE: The Neutral Zone is only in effect for K-3<sup>rd</sup> grades and is in place to give the offense a reasonable chance to successfully set up and run a play.**

5. Free throw line shall be the regulation 15 feet from the basket for 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grades but 12 feet from the basket for K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade divisions. **NOTE: The shorter distance for the younger age divisions is designed to develop proper form in order to increase success in younger players.**



## VI Rosters

1. Home teams wear light color jerseys. Visiting teams wear dark color jerseys.
2. Teams must field a minimum of four (4) players at all times.

## VII Timing

1. Games are played on a 32-minute continuous running clock with four 8-minute quarters. The clock stops only for timeouts, halftime and quarter breaks. The clock will stop for out-of-bounds plays and fouls during the final two (2) minutes of each half, as long as the score is with 10-points.
2. Halftime is two (2) minutes. Time between 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> periods is one (1) minute.
3. Each team has two (2) 60-second timeouts per half. **Unused timeouts CANNOT be carried over to the next half or a potential overtime.** Each team will be allowed one 60-second timeout if the game extends to an extra period.
4. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion. In the K-1<sup>st</sup> grade divisions the clock may stop at the officials' discretion to help a player / players with rules instruction.
5. In the event of an injury, the clock will stop and then restart when the injured player is removed from the court.
6. If the score is tied at the end of 32 minutes, one (1) SINGLE 4-minute extra period will be played to determine the winning team. If the score remains tied at the end of the overtime, the game shall be declared a tie.



## VIII Scoring

### 1. **FIELD GOAL:**

When a team makes a basket, they score two (2) points and the ball goes over to the opposing team who throws it in from the baseline they are defending.

### 2. **THREE-POINT FIELD GOAL:**

In 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade divisions if a field goal is made from outside of the three-point arc, then that basket is worth three (3) points.

### 3. **FREE THROW:** A free throw is worth one (1) point.

Fouling a shooter always results in two (2) or three (3) free throws being awarded to the shooter, depending on where the shooter was when they shoot, if the basket is not made. If the shot was beyond the three-point arc, then the shooter is awarded three (3) free throws if the shot is not made.

### 4. **BONUS:**

Fouls by a team will be totaled as the game progresses. Once a team commits seven (7) or more personal fouls in a half the team offended will be considered in the “bonus” and will be awarded “1 and 1” opportunities for free throws. If the offended player makes their first free throw, they get an attempt for a second. If the offended player misses the first free throw, the ball is live on the rebound.

### 5. **DOUBLE BONUS:**

An offended team will be awarded a “double bonus” when they have been fouled 10 or more times in a half. The offended player will be allowed to shoot two (2) free throws, regardless if they make the first one or not.

### 6. **MERCY RULE:**

At no time will the scoreboard reflect a difference of more than 20 points. The score sheet will contain the official score.

### 7. **SHOOTING ON OWN GOAL:**

**Kindergarten-1<sup>st</sup> Grade divisions only** -- A player that scores on their own goal will have the score waived off. The team will retain possession but will take the ball out from under the basket.



# IX Coaching

1. Coaches are expected to adhere to Lincoln Parks and Recreation philosophies, coaching guidelines and code of conduct.
2. Coaches are typically volunteer parents or family members helping the players learn and enjoy the game. Parents are encouraged to support the coach at all times.



3. **Lincoln Parks & Recreation philosophy of Kindergarten-1<sup>st</sup> grade basketball:**

The object of the Kindergarten-1<sup>st</sup> grade program is to provide players a chance to learn the game in a controlled scrimmage-like environment. Players are encouraged to have fun and learn. Coaches are encouraged to foster a love for the game and teach basic fundamentals. Officials will manage the game and help give advice to players / help coach when needed.

4. **Lincoln Parks & Recreation philosophy of 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> grade basketball:**

The object of the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> grade program is to provide players a chance to learn the game in a controlled yet competitive environment. Players are encouraged to expand their knowledge of the game and have fun. Coaches are encouraged to expand on the game and fundamentals with an emphasis on fun. Officials will manage the game and help give advice when needed.



5. **Lincoln Parks & Recreation philosophy of 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade basketball:**

The object of the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade program is to provide players with a chance to expand their game in a competitive environment. Players are encouraged to expand their game, run plays, and have fun. Coaches are encouraged to expand on fundamentals and plays along with preparing players for middle school while having fun. Officials will manage the game and give advice when needed.

## X Playing Time

Each player must play at least one (1) quarter. No player should play four (4) full quarters.

## XI Dribbling

### Kindergarten-1<sup>st</sup> grade divisions

The first double-dribble/traveling violation on a team's possession will be a warning. The team will receive the ball on the sideline and a warning will be announced.

### 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade divisions

Regular double-dribble / traveling rules will be in effect.

## XII Scoring Fast Break

A 'scoring fast break' is defined as a long pass between players (an outlet pass) without the defense in position, leading to a quick score. This can be done off a steal or an inbound pass.

- a. Once a team is up by more than 10 points, they may not use a "scoring fast break." If a scoring fast break happens when a team is up by more than 10 points, the basket will be waived off and possession will be returned to the other team under the basket.
- b. A play in which a defender steals the ball and either throws an outlet pass or runs down the court without the defense BUT does not score and waits for the defense to set before scoring is not a "breakaway," **NOT** a "**SCORING** fast break" and is a legal play.



# XIII Defense

1. Teams may play man-to-man or zone defense.

## 2. DEFENSIVE LIMIT:

- a. **Kindergarten-1<sup>st</sup> grade divisions** – The defense may not extend beyond the 10-foot volleyball line on the defensive team's side of the court. If a team is ahead by 20 points or more the team ahead may not play defense outside of the 3-point arc. If the defense is found in violation of the rule, an illegal defense violation is enforced by giving the offensive team the ball at midcourt. Continuous illegal defense violations will result in awarding the offense with free throws and retained possession of the ball. Officials have final say on all illegal defense violations. No pressing is allowed in Kindergarten-1<sup>st</sup> grade divisions.
- b. **2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> grade divisions** - Half court pressing is permitted in the final two minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters (or any overtime) if the score differential is less than 10 points. Prior to those times the defense may not extend beyond the 10-foot volleyball line.
- c. **4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade divisions** - Full court pressing is allowed in the final two (2) minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters (or any overtime) if the score differential is less than 10 points. Prior to those times, the defense may not extend beyond the midcourt line.



## XIV Unsportsmanlike Conduct

1. If the site supervisor or referee witnesses any acts of intentional fouling, elbowing, cheap shots, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped, and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!**
2. Offensive or confrontational language is not allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one (1) warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.
3. Berating officials by a coach, player, or parent is considered unsportsmanlike conduct. Individuals could be ejected from the game or removed from the complex if the official or site supervisor deems it flagrant.
4. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach, or official.
5. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship as well:
  - a. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.
  - b. Keep comments clean and profanity free.
  - c. Compliment ALL players, not just one (1) child or team.
6. Any ejected player, coach, or spectator must leave the facility immediately and will not be permitted to play / coach / attend their team's next scheduled game.
7. Fans are required to keep courts safe and kid friendly:
  - a. Keep younger children and equipment such chairs in the approved area and away from the court of play.
  - b. Dispose of ALL trash in designated trash cans.



# XV Fouls

## General

- a. The referee will call all penalties.
- b. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
- c. Only the head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question calls.

## Personal Fouls

Hitting	
Pushing	Contact that displaces an opponent (physically moving opponent).
Slapping	
Holding	Contact that interferes with a player's freedom of movement.
Illegal Pick/Screen	An offensive player sticks out a limb to block the path of a defender.
Charging	
Blocking	
Flagrant Foul	
Intentional Foul	

## Personal Foul Penalties:

If a player is shooting while being fouled, then the shooter gets two (2) free throws if the shot does not go in, but only one (1) free throw if the shot does go in.

1. Three (3) free throws are awarded if the player is fouled while shooting for a three-point goal and they miss their shot. If a player is fouled while shooting a three-point shot and makes it anyway, they are awarded one (1) free throw. Thus, they could score four (4) points on the play.
2. **Inbounds.** If fouled while not shooting, the ball is given to the team the foul was committed upon. They get the nearest side or baseline, out of bounds, and have five (5) seconds to pass the ball onto the court.
3. **One and one.** If the team committing the foul has seven (7) or more fouls in a half, then the player who was fouled is awarded one (1) free throw. If the player makes the first shot, then they are awarded another free throw.
4. **Ten or more fouls.** If the team committing the foul has ten or more fouls, then the fouled player receives two (2) free throws, regardless if they make their first shot.

## Disqualification

1. A player is disqualified after their 5<sup>th</sup> personal foul or their 1<sup>st</sup> technical foul.
2. Any player or coach who receives a technical foul will be removed from the game as well as the facility and will not be eligible to be in attendance for the next scheduled game. Failure to leave the facility in a reasonable amount of time will result in forfeiture of the game.



## XVI Program Principles & Guidelines

If there is reasonable suspicion that a player has sustained a concussion or brain injury they must be removed from practice and games. Notification shall be made to the parents and the Lincoln Parks and Recreation Team Sports Office. The player shall not participate in games or practice until written clearance is provided by a licensed health care professional to the Lincoln Parks and Recreation Team Sports Office.

## XVII Coaching Tips

### 1. Coaching a jr.nba Basketball Team

As a jr.nba coach, your main goal should be to create a fun and safe learning environment for your players. Whether you are an experienced coach or a novice taking the reins of your first team, there are several things to keep in mind as you begin your jr.nba season. The connection to the real-life adult NBA game they see every week is one you should feel free to emphasize.



### 2. Everybody Plays

jr.nba games were designed specifically to make it easier for every player to have a role in a team's success. Your coaching should emphasize the "working together" aspect of the games.

### 3. Sportsmanship Rules!

Help your players be good sports. After a game, shake hands with or do a cheer for the other team. Applaud good play by both sides. Treat officials with respect. While imitating you, your team won't even know it's being taught a good lesson.

### 4. Let Them Play Basketball!

While teaching basketball skills and strategies is important, keep your lessons as simple as possible. As your team grasps the basics, move on to more advanced ideas. Overloading young players with too much information too early can cause them only confusion . . . and you, headaches.

### 5. Have Fun!

We thank you for your volunteer service. Lincoln Parks and Recreation jr.nba basketball couldn't happen without you. We appreciate your hard work and strive to make this fun for you as well.

A companion curriculum with youth coaching drills and practice ideas for both "Rookie" (beginner) and "Starter" (post-beginner) players, provided by the NBA, is available online at [www.teamsideline.com/lincolnne](http://www.teamsideline.com/lincolnne).

You can find it under the "Downloads" tab and the "Youth Jr. NBA Basketball" heading.



# XVIII Coaching Principles

## 1. General Youth Coaching Principles

- a. Coaching is an extremely important responsibility. A good coach always places the best interest of a player before winning.
- b. The players and parents have placed you in a position of leadership and you have a responsibility to give them your best effort. Additionally, this basketball experience will play a significant factor in determining whether the players continue participating in basketball in the future.
- c. Coaching youth sports is a difficult job because some parents expect professional results from people who mostly are volunteers.
- d. If you follow the coaching guidelines and general principles below, the players and their parents will be better served.

## 2. Ten Coaching Guidelines

- a. **RESPECT THE GOLDEN RULE** Treat your players, their parents, and the officials in the same manner you want to be treated. That means no yelling, no sarcasm, and no embarrassing anyone in front of others. To gain respect, you must give respect.
- b. **BE EVERYONE'S COACH** As the saying goes, "there is no **"I"** in TEAM." Let everyone contribute. That goes for your own kids, too. If you coach your own child, be sure not to shine the light too bright or too low on them. Treat everyone the same.
- c. **APPRECIATE YOUR ASSISTANTS** No youth basketball coach can do it alone. Find a good assistant or two, give them responsibly and never stop thanking them.
- d. **FOCUS ON THE FUNDAMENTALS** Help your players master basketball basics. Wins and losses come and go but you only get one chance to develop a player's skills. Don't waste that opportunity. And remind your players that hustle is a fundamental skill.
- e. **TEACH – AND ENFORCE – GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP** Spend time at practice and before games explaining to your team how to behave after a win or a loss. Good sportsmanship means no trash talking or taunting. Teach your players to develop a positive relationship with the officials. Have the courage to enforce sportsmanship if one of your players misbehaves. That's the key.
- f. **UNDERSTAND THE RULES OF THE GAME** Read the rulebook. Identify any special policies your league has adopted. You can't expect your players to know the rules if you do not.
- g. **HAVE A POSSITIVE RAPPORT WITH THE OFFICIALS** An official will not respond positively if you try to bully or intimidate them. Instead, act like an adult. Ask questions if necessary. Seek clarification if it's warranted. Set the right tone for your team by never arguing a call or disparaging an official.
- h. **PROMOTE FUN** Avoid getting too serious. Don't get crazy about winning. Make sure you smile. Above all else, make sure kids are having fun. If they aren't then you are doing something wrong.
- i. **BE PATIENT** Young players are going to make mistakes. They need the freedom to make mistakes. It's your job to help them learn from those mistakes. This takes time and patience.
- j. **TALK TO THE PARENTS AND UNDERSTAND THEIR GOALS** From the first practice, talk with the parents. Explain your coaching philosophy. If a parent has a particular concern, give them the opportunity to discuss it with you. Parents come to games to see their kids play. Make sure every player has the opportunity to make a contribution.

## **XIX Game Court Locations**

### **1. Belmont Recreation Center (1234 Judson Street) – 2 courts**



Parking to the south and west of the recreation center entrance.

### **2. Calvert Recreation Center (4500 Stockwell Street) – 2 courts**



Parking to the south of the recreation center and to the east of the school.

### **3. Air Park Community Center (4900 Mike Scholl Street) – 1 court**



## **XX Weather**

Be sure that everyone on the team signs up for our text alert system. It's free and easy. Go to [www.teamsideline.com](http://www.teamsideline.com), click on the "[Text Alert Sign Up](#)" icon at the top of the main page and follow the prompts to register. This is our main form of communication when games are canceled. Game-day information can also be found at the Parks and Recreation Team Sports cancellation hotline: (402) 441-7892 x 1