

2025 PLAYBOOK



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Introduction

The Colorado Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) and Colorado Association of Recreational Athletics (CARA) produce the CARA Skills Challenge.

This program provides the youth of Colorado with a statewide basketball competition testing their skills in dribbling, passing and shooting. This is an exciting program that can take a boy or girl from a local competition to a sectional event, culminating at a state championship if he or she is the top scorer in his or her age group.

This playbook is designed to ensure everyone involved with the various levels of competition has a good understanding of the program and all the rules are followed carefully and consistently. It provides information, suggestions and guidelines regarding staffing, equipment and on-court execution.

Communication, teamwork and organization will ensure safe and successful competitions and thus, the ultimate success of the CARA Skills Challenge.

Chris Hopes

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Program Overview

TITLE

The Colorado Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) and the Colorado Association of Recreational Athletics (CARA) produce the CARA Skills Challenge.

PURPOSE

The CARA Skills Challenge is an opportunity for boys and girls ages 6 – 13 to compete against their peers in dribbling, passing and shooting skills.

PHILOSOPHY

CPRA and CARA want every child to have an equal opportunity to compete. There is no registration fee or purchase required for any participant to enter.

PARTICIPANTS

Children must be between the ages of 6 and 13 and show a valid birth certificate for age verification if they are winners at a local competition. Separate divisions are offered for boys and girls. All contestants must complete an entry form which can be obtained from a local parks and recreation agency or local youth organization.

AGE GROUPS

There are four age divisions: 6/7, 8/9, 10/11 and 12/13 for both boys and girls. Age is determined as of April 30 of the contest year (2026). The top scorer in each age group from each local competition will advance to the sectional competition. From each sectional, the top scorer in each age group will advance to the state championship.

LOCAL & SECTIONAL COMPETITIONS

Each local parks and recreation agency or local youth organization hosting a local and sectional competition is authorized by CPRA to hold the event in accordance with the rules and information contained in this Playbook. Local competitions will be in December/January. Sectionals will be February 1st – March 31st. Saturdays and Sundays are recommended.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

The state championship will be held in April of 2026 day and location TBA. The top scorers in each age group at each sectional will compete at the state championship.

Time Schedule

January 2, 2025 Commitment Form Deadline

December 1 – January 31 Local competitions

**January 31 Local results due to sectional coordinators
and State Commissioner**

February 1 – March 31 Sectional competitions

**April 2, 2026 Sectional results due to State Director with birth
certificates and entry forms**

April - TBD State Championship

Eligibility

1. There is no charge to participate in the CARA Skills Challenge. No special equipment is required.
2. The competition is open to all boys and girls ages 6 – 13. The four age classifications are based upon the child's age as of April 30 of the contest year (2026). Age classifications are 6/7, 8/9, 10/11 and 12/13.
3. All participants must show proof of age at the sectional level of competition. Failure to provide a birth certificate or religious document (baptismal record) will result in that participant being ineligible to compete. Participants do not need to provide proof of age to participate in a local competition. However, participants do need to provide proof of age if they are a winner at a local competition.
4. Participants may only register and compete in one (1) local round of competition. Competing in more than one local round will result in the automatic disqualification of that participant.
5. Only agencies that have returned a commitment form and agency fee to the CPRA office (PO Box 1037, Wheat Ridge, CO 80034 / fax 303-237-9750) will be allowed to host a local competition.
6. CPRA Member Agency Fee: \$55

Birth Date Verification Chart

Age as of April 30 of the competition year (2026)

Age Group 6/7: May 1, 2020, to April 30, 2019

Age Group 8/9: May 1, 2018, to April 30, 2017

Age Group 10/11: May 1, 2016, to April 30, 2015

Age Group 12/13: May 1, 2014, to April 30, 2013

Rules

GENERAL

1. All participants will compete in three events – Dribbling, Passing and Shooting.
2. Shoes must be worn. Only sneakers (gym shoes) will be allowed.
3. A participant's final score is his/her cumulative total of points received in each event based on how he/she finished within that event.
4. The following basketball and basketball rim specifications are recommended at all local competitions and will be used at all sectional and state competitions.

***BASKETBALL SPECIFICATIONS**

- 6/7 boys and girls shall use a junior basketball with a minimum circumference of 27 inches to a maximum of 27 1/2 inches.
- 8/9 boys and girls, 10/11 boys and girls and 12/13 girls shall use an intermediate basketball with a minimum circumference of 28 ½ inches to a maximum of 29 inches.
- 12/13 boys shall use an official basketball with a minimum circumference of 29 ½ inches to a maximum of 30 inches.

RIM SPECIFICATIONS

- 6/7 boys and girls shall use an 8-foot rim for the shooting competition.
 - 8/9, 10/11 and 12/13 boys and girls shall use a 10-foot rim for the shooting competition.
5. Each local park and recreation agency or youth organization hosting the CARA Skills Challenge must be able to provide an 8' and 10' basket. Note: all local hosts are encouraged to offer an 8' rim at their local competition. If your organization cannot provide an 8' rim, you may allow your participants to compete on the 10' rim with the understanding that if they qualify, they will use the 8' rim at sectionals. Please make every effort to use an 8' rim at your local.
 6. Inclement Weather: Competitions should be held if possible. Threatening or dangerous weather conditions will result in on-site cancellation and rescheduling of the event at another time. If a sectional is cancelled, call your state director to determine when your event will be rescheduled.

**Participants must use basketballs provided by the local, sectional and state host. Participants may not use their own ball.*

TIE BREAKERS

1. Due to the number of participants involved in the local competitions, the shooting score will be used first to break ties at this level. In the event of an overall tie at for any place (1st, 2nd or 3rd), the participants involved will have their scores compared, and the participant with the highest shooting score will be declared the winner of that place. If a tie continues to exist, a playoff will consist of the participants competing head to head in the shooting event. The player with the best score will be declared the winner of that place. If a tie still exists, the players will repeat the shooting contest head-to-head until a winner is determined.

Rules (Continued)

EVENTS

DRIBBLING

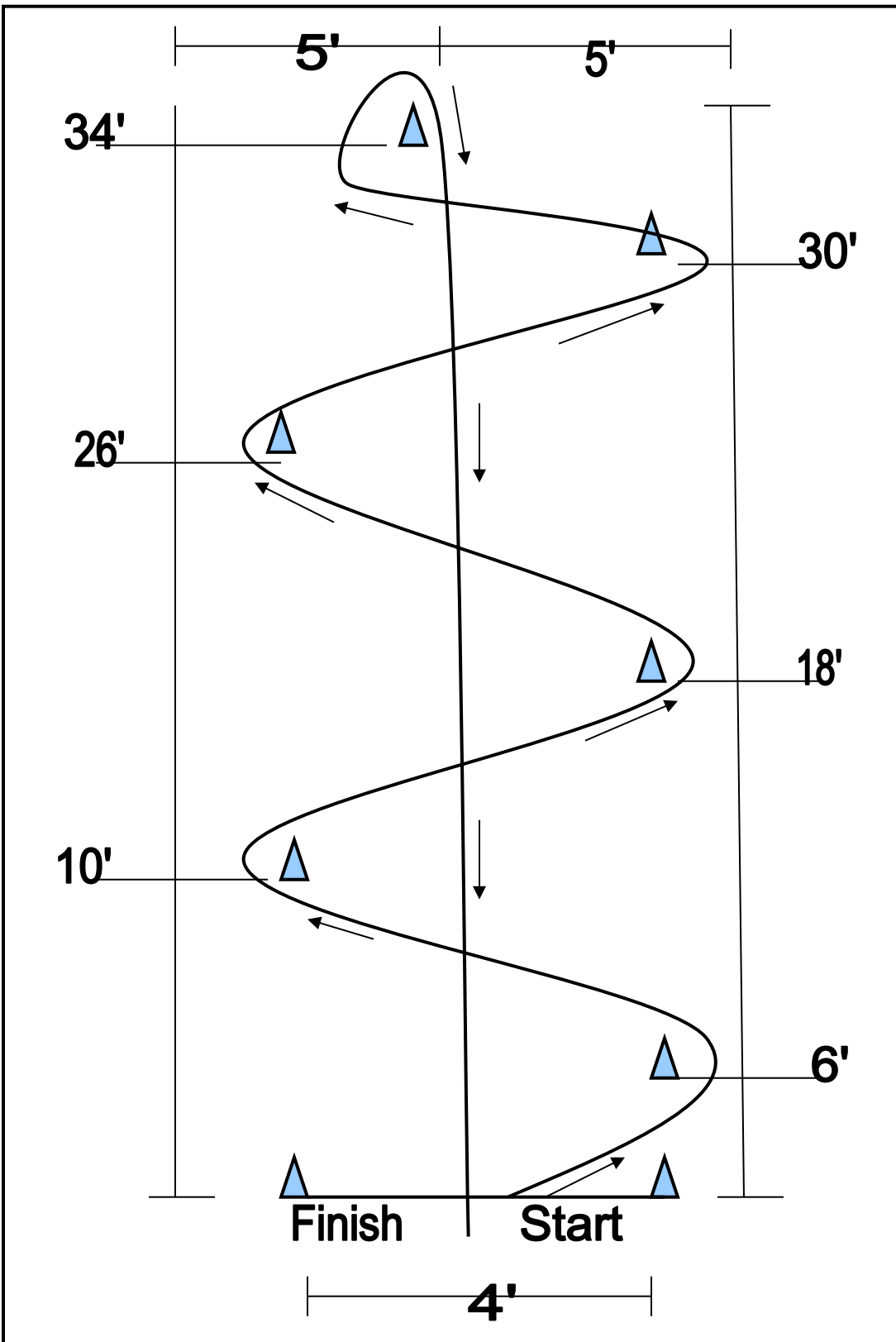
For the skills challenge, players will be timed on a stopwatch as they weave around six cones and return down the middle of the cones. Each time will be given corresponding points reflecting how quickly the challenge was completed. Each participant is rewarded a minimum of 22.5 points for his/her attempt.

1. Participants must use a ball provided by the host agency.
2. Each participant makes one (1) attempt through an obstacle of cones.
3. Cones should be 12" in height and should not be taped down to the floor.
4. Placement of cones. See diagram - Dribbling page 11.
5. Starter will start clock when participant begins and stop the watch when the finish line is crossed.
6. Participants must begin with both feet behind the starting line.
7. Participants must start to the first right cone.
8. Participants must dribble around each cone with his/her feet going on the outside of each cone. The ball does not have go outside of the cone, just the participant's feet.
9. Participants must dribble back down the middle of the course.
10. The ball may be in front of the cone throughout the course, however, the player's body must go around (to the outside of) the cone.
11. Penalty for a missed cone or a knocked down cone is five (5) seconds. Five (5) seconds will be added to the time for every cone missed or knocked down.
12. For a cone(s) missed/knocked down the scorer shall mark the appropriate cone on the score sheet to indicate cones missed/knocked down.
13. Participants must retrieve their own ball.
14. For safety purposes, cones should be placed with a minimum of 10' clearance of obstructions.

Dribbling Scoring Chart

Seconds	Points	Seconds	Points	Seconds	Points	Score
9 & Under	120	15.1 – 15.5	87.5	21.6 – 22.0	55	Time _____ Plus Penalties _____ Total Time _____ Total Score _____
9.1 - 9.5	117.5	15.6 – 16.0	85	22.1 – 22.5	52.5	
9.6 – 10.0	115	16.1 – 16.5	82.5	22.6 – 23.0	50	
10.1 – 10.5	112.5	16.6 – 17.0	80	23.1 – 23.5	47.5	
10.6 – 11.0	110	17.1 – 17.5	77.5	23.6 – 24.0	45	
11.1 – 11.5	107.5	17.6 – 18.0	75	24.1 – 24.5	42.5	
11.6 – 12.0	105	18.1 – 18.5	72.5	24.6 – 25.0	40	
12.1 – 12.5	102.5	18.6 – 19.0	70	25.1 – 25.5	37.5	
12.6 – 13.0	100	19.1 – 19.5	67.5	25.6 – 26.0	35	
13.1 – 13.5	97.5	19.6 – 20.0	65	26.1 – 26.5	32.5	
13.6 – 14.0	95	20.1 – 20.5	62.5	26.6 – 27.0	30	
14.1 – 14.5	92.5	20.6 – 21.0	60	27.1 – 27.5	27.5	
14.6 – 15.0	90	21.1 – 21.5	57.5	27.6 – 28.0	25	
				28.1 & Up	22.5	

DIAGRAM- Dribbling



PASSING

In this challenge, each participant gets 30 seconds to PASS as many times as possible from any of the three marked lines on the floor.

1. Participants must use a ball provided by the host agency.
2. Each participant gets 30 seconds to attempt as many passes, chest or bounce, from the stationary numbered lines marked on the floor. The farther back a participant is, the more points he/she can earn. Participants will decide where they will pass from.
3. Participants will start with the ball 30' from target and dribble to first pass attempt.
4. A participant must not cross the marked line when attempting a pass at the 10' mark. If the participant does cross the line, that attempt will be a scratch and no points will be given for pass. If the participant crosses either the 15' or 20' marked line, if pass is successful, participant will be awarded the closer point total.
5. Participants must retrieve their ball.
6. Placement of lines: see diagram passing page 13.
7. Numbered marked lines:

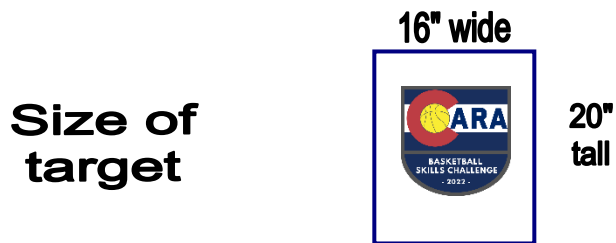
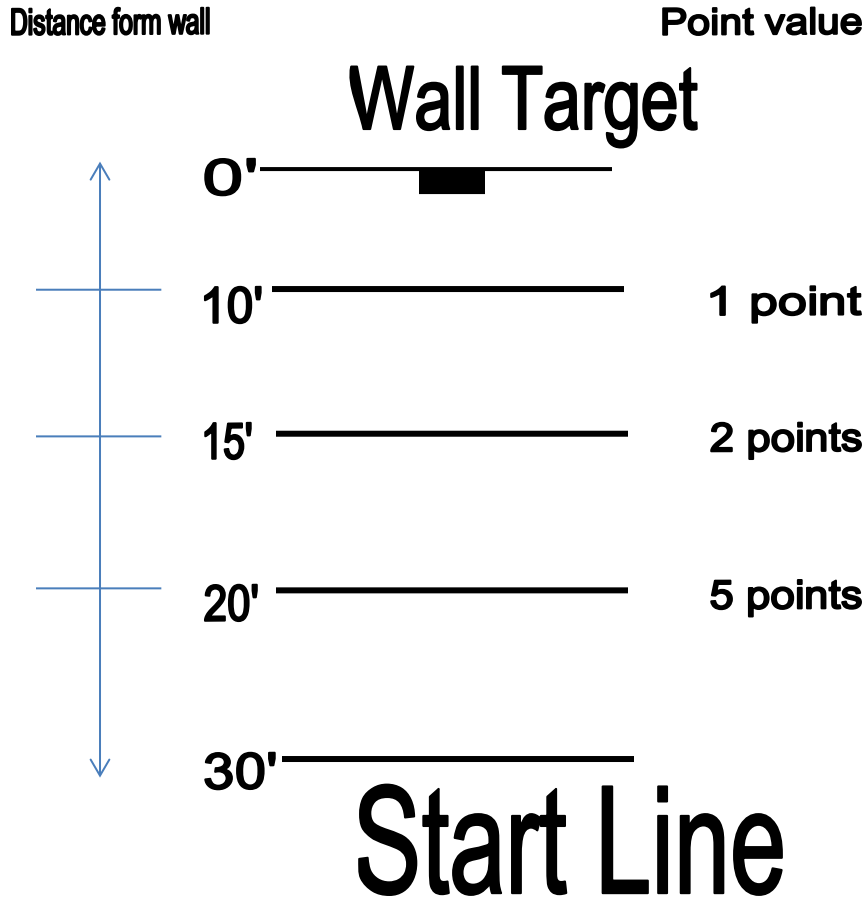
Passing lines marked at:

10'	1 points
15'	2 points
20'	5 points

Starting line marked at **30'** from wall target.

7. A majority of the ball must hit inside the target outline in order for the pass to count.
8. Target is 16 inches wide, 20 inches tall and 26 ½ inches from the bottom of the target to the ground. See an example of the target in the host files.
9. Basketball specifications are recommended at all local competitions and will be used at all sectional and state competitions.
 - 6/7 boys and girls shall use a junior basketball with a minimum circumference of 27 inches to a maximum of 27 1/2 inches.
 - 8/9 boys and girls, 10/11 boys and girls and 12/13 girls shall use an intermediate basketball with a minimum circumference of 28 ½ inches to a maximum of 29 inches.
 - 12/13 boys shall use an official basketball with a minimum circumference of 29 ½ inches to a maximum of 30 inches

DIAGRAM - Passing



Bottom of the target is 26 1/2" off the ground

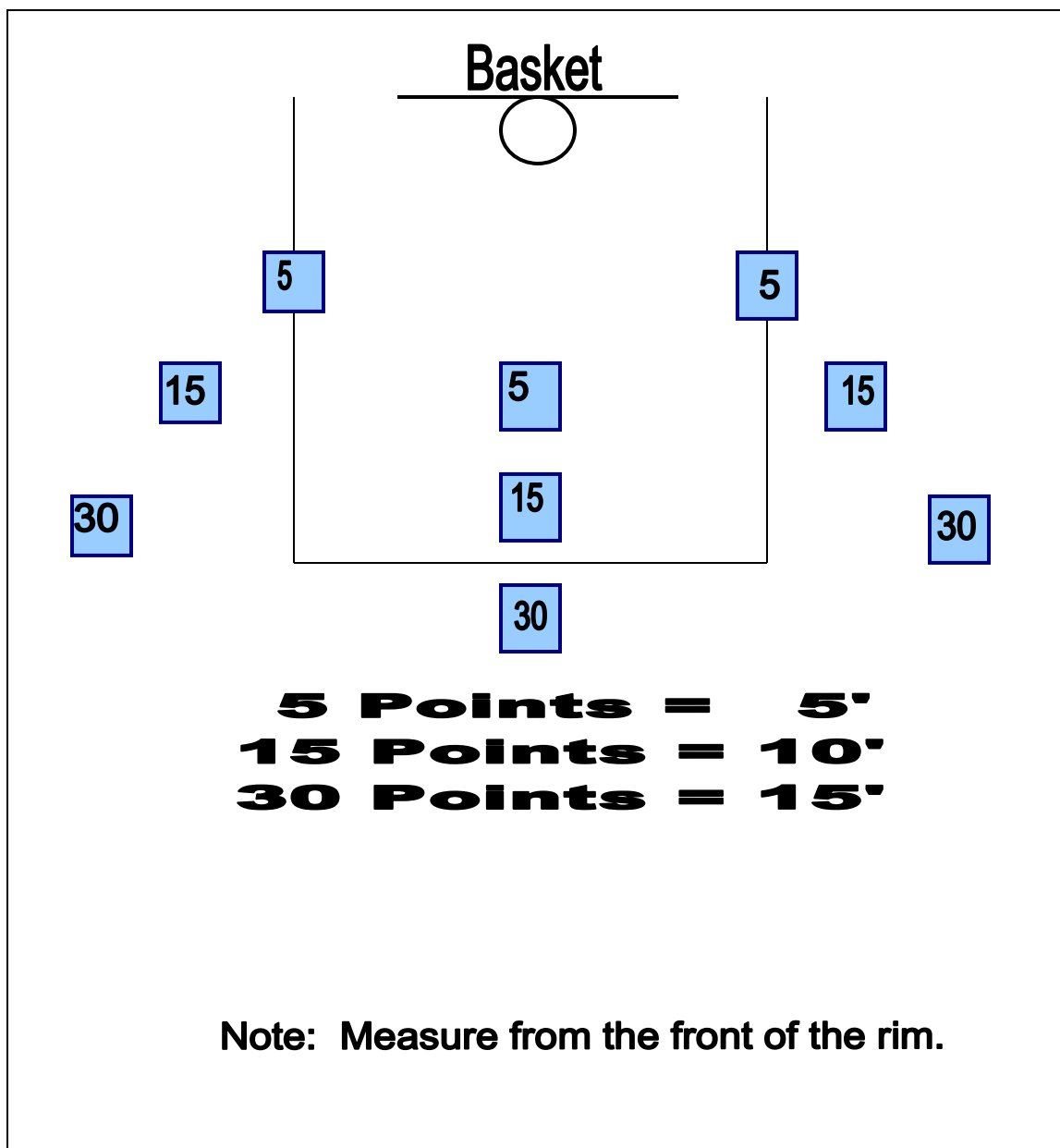
SHOOTING

In this challenge, each player gets 30 seconds to shoot as many times as possible from any numbered, marked spot on the floor.

1. Participants must use a ball provided by the host agency.
2. Each participant gets 30 seconds to attempt as many shots as possible from the stationary numbered spots marked on the floor. The farther back a participant is, the more points he/she can earn. Participants will decide where they will shoot their shots.
3. Each participant's foot must be in contact with the spot at time of release for the score to count. The player's foot must be touching the spot at the beginning of the act of shooting. No continuation.
4. Participants must retrieve their ball.
5. Placement of spots: see diagram Shooting page 15. Use shooting angle lines (page 16) to place markers.
6. Numbered marked spots:
 - 8' rim** 6/7 boys & girls will have spots marked at
 - 5' 5 points
 - 10' 15 points
 - 15' 30 points
 - 10' rim** 8/9, 10/11 and 12/13 boys & girls will have spots marked at
 - 5' 5 points
 - 10' 15 points
 - 15' 30 points
7. Basketball specifications are recommended at all local competitions and will be used at all sectional and state competitions.
 - 6/7 boys and girls shall use a junior basketball with a minimum circumference of 27 inches to a maximum of 27 1/2 inches.
 - 8/9 boys and girls, 10/11 boys and girls and 12/13 girls shall use an intermediate basketball with a minimum circumference of 28 ½ inches to a maximum of 29 inches.
 - 12/13 boys shall use an official basketball with a minimum circumference of 29 ½ inches to a maximum of 30 inches.

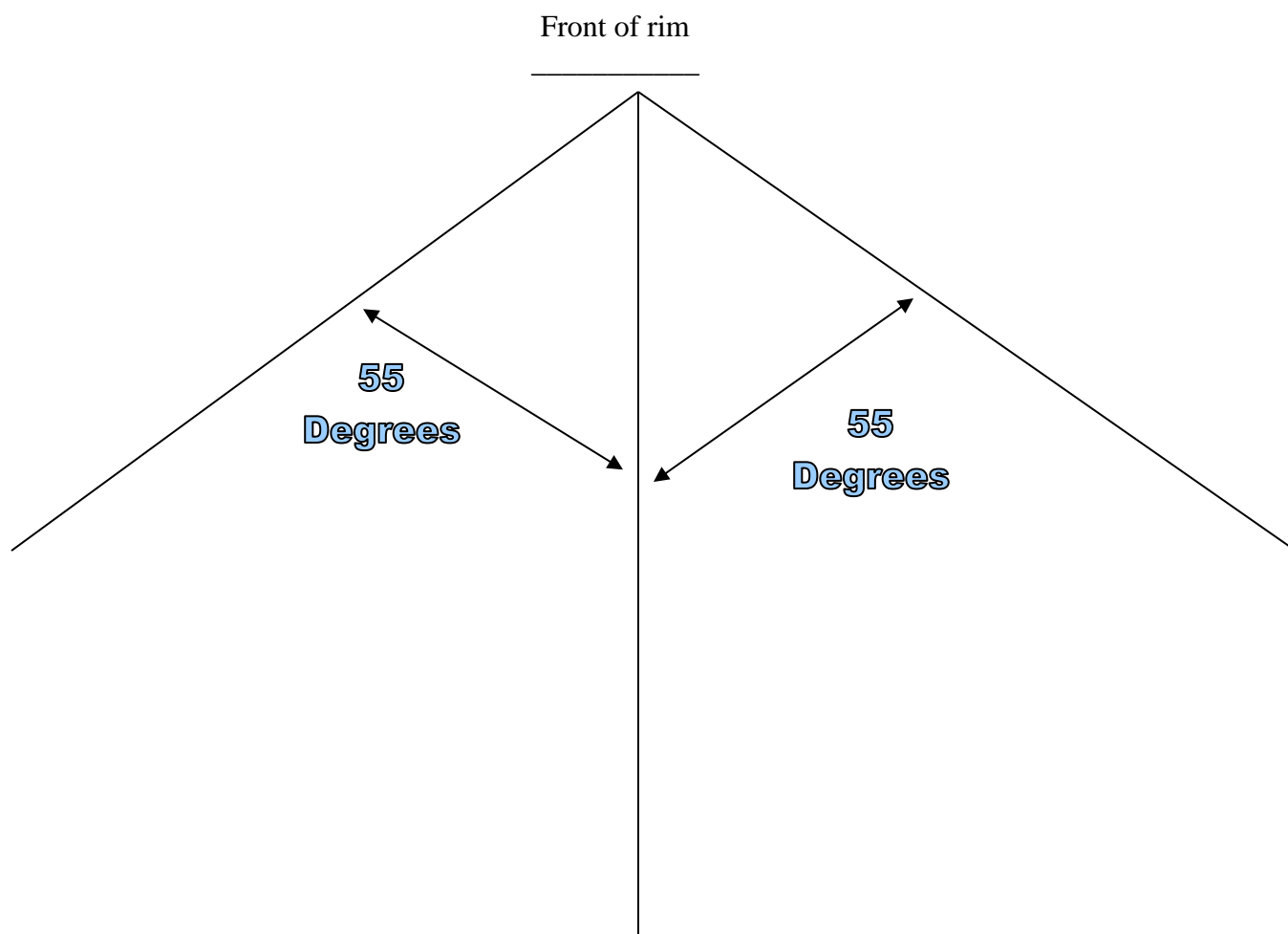
Note: all local hosts are encouraged to offer an 8' rim at their local. If your organization cannot provide an 8' rim, you may allow your participants to participate on the 10' rim with the understanding that if they qualify, they will use the 8' rim at sectionals.

DIAGRAM - Shooting



Shooting Angle Chart

Use this string chart at the front of the rim to give proper angles as you measure out markers.



Gym Staffing and Set-Up

It is recommended that age and gender groupings rotate around from event to event to enable the scorers and judges to keep these age groupings and their scores together on a single clipboard, making the tabulation of final event scores easier and to speed up the event.

DRIBBLING

One Starter/
Timer

Explains the dribbling rules to the players.
Starts the stopwatch as the player begins the dribbling event.
Calls missed/knocked down cones.
Stops the watch once player crosses finish line.

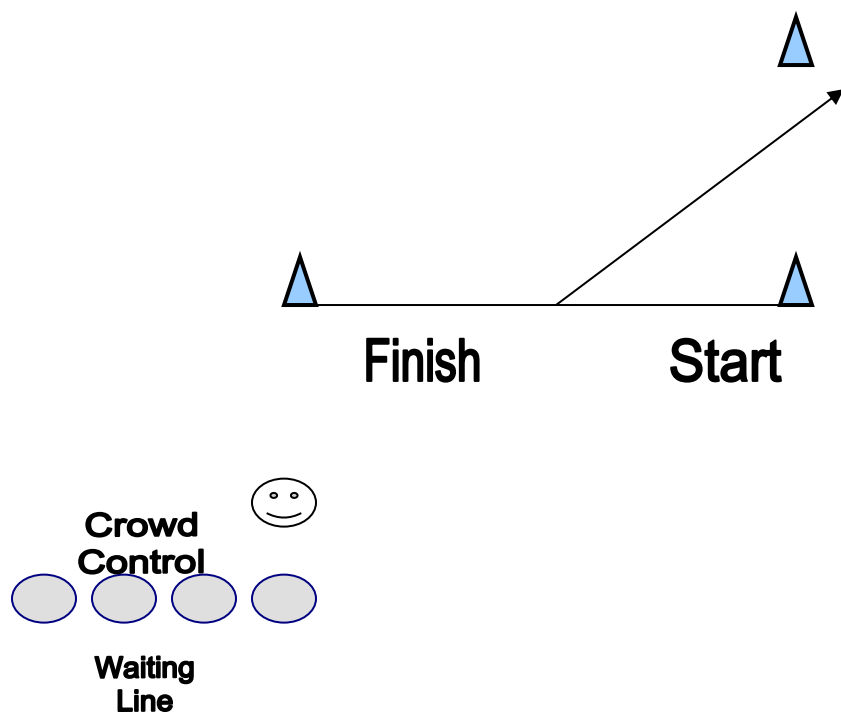
One Score
Tabulator

Records times as each player finishes.
List total points scored.

One Crowd/
Participant Controller

Keeps participants in the correct order for competing.
Keeps order and control

Note: These suggestions are for one line of competition. If you use more than one line, increase the staff as necessary.



PASSING

One Starter
Timer

Explains the passing rules to the participants.
Starts the stopwatch when the participant passes the start line
Will let player know when 5 seconds is left.
Stops the watch once 30 seconds is up.
Ball must be released by the end of the 30 seconds for pass to count.

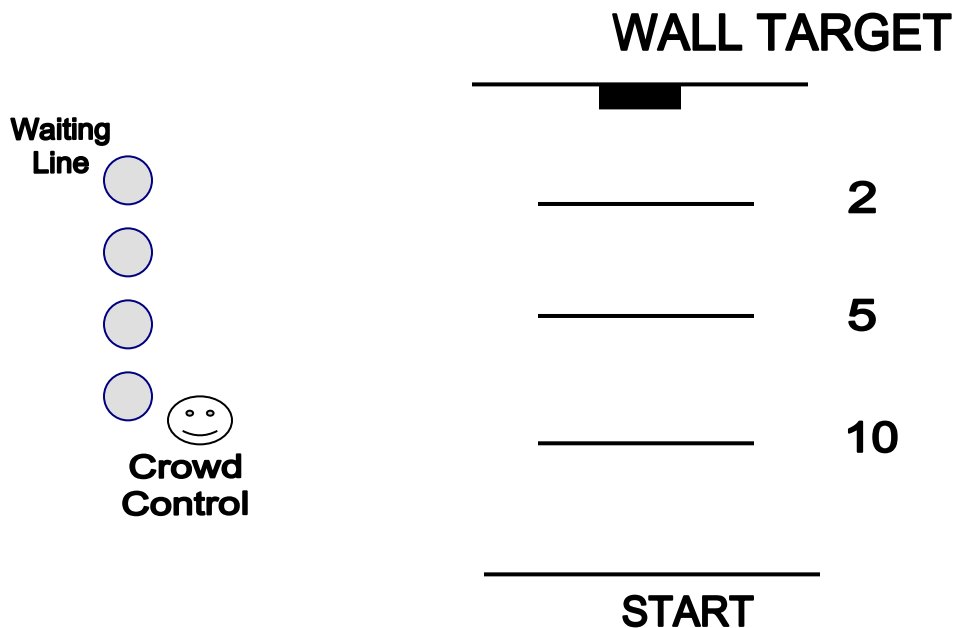
One Score Tabulator

Keeps track of all passes made.
Does not count pass if player's foot passes the 10' line.
Marks player's scores on the score sheet

Crowd/
Participant Controller

Keeps participants in the correct order for competing.
Keeps order and control

Note: These suggestions are for one line of competition. If you use more than one line, increase the staff as necessary.



SHOOTING

One Starter/
Timer

Explains the shooting rules to the players.
Starts the stopwatch when the first shot is released.
Stops the clock if ball becomes lodged/stuck on rim.
Will let player know when 5 seconds is left.
Stops the watch once 30 seconds is up.
Ball must be released by the end of the 30 seconds for shot to count.

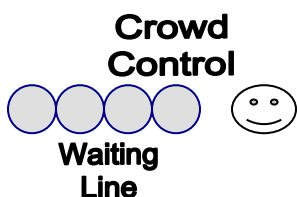
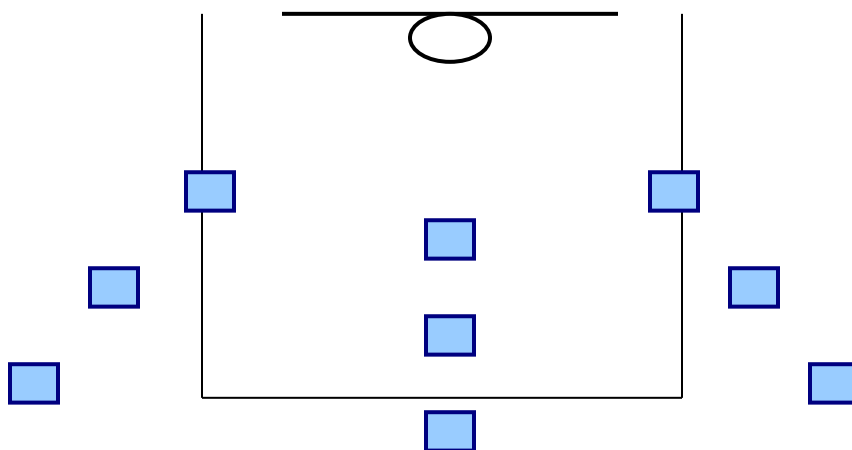
One Score Tabulator

Keeps track of all shots made.
Does not count shot if player's foot is not in contact with mark.
Marks players scores on the score sheet.

Crowd/
Participant Controller

Keeps participants in the correct order for competing.
Keeps order and control.

Note: These suggestions are for one line of competition. If you use more than one line, increase the staff as necessary.



Scoring Instructions

1. Scores are awarded based on how each participant finishes within their age group in each event. Points will be totaled for all three events.
2. There will be no ties. In the event of a tie, please refer to Tie Breakers (See rules section, pages 9-10) for details.
3. Scores are not cumulative from local to sectional and sectional to the state finals. All competitors begin with a score of zero at each level of competition.
4. Video and pictures will not be reviewed in challenge to scoring decided on by judges present at an event.

Responsibilities of Staff

LOCAL & SECTIONAL COMPETITIONS

1. Keep State Director informed of your progress.
2. Follow the time schedule.
3. Local hosts: Email or fax the winner results sheet (See Results Form in host files) including entry form and age verification to your sectional coordinators the day after your event. After faxing winners' information, send all participant entry forms, age verification and runner-up forms to the state director. (See contact information, page 3)
4. Sectional hosts: Send the result sheet for your sectional including all your entry forms and age verifications of your sectional winners to the state director the day after your event. (See contact information, page 3).
5. Use the congratulatory letter (See Local Winner Letter in Host Files) to inform your winners of the date, time and location of their next level of competition.
6. Oversee operations and logistics of local and sectional competitions.
7. Handle distribution of merchandise, prize and gifts to all participants and volunteers at the competitions.
8. Publicize and promote the CARA Skills Challenge in your area, including passing out agency brochures, posting fliers, distributing entry forms, contacting local media, etc.
9. Send the results of your competition to the local media. (See sample news release in Host Files)
10. Participants must compete during the scheduled time of the competition.

Equipment

Each host agency is responsible for providing the necessary staff and equipment to run this event.

RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT

Equipment provided by CPRA

- Promotional Posters (Locals – must pick up at a CARA meeting)
- Ribbons (Locals)
- Medals (Sectionals)

Equipment provided in playbook & host files

- Participant Certificates (Locals)
- Certificates (Locals) 1st – 3rd Place – See host file (PDF Form)
- Passing Target - Provided at sectionals and state - See host file
- Floor Markers - Shooting/Passing Spots - See host file – (lamine for better marker)
- Score Sheets - See host file (PDF document)
- Registration Forms - See host file (PDF document)
- Flyers - (Easy to fill out Word form on Host file)
- Congratulatory Confirmation Letter - See host file (Word form)
- Results Sheet – See host file (Excel form)

Equipment provided by host:

- Pens & Pencils
- Chairs
- First Aid Kit
- Stopwatches
- Tables
- Camera & Film
- Clipboards
- Rims - 8' and 10'
- Tape Measures
- Calculators
- Basketballs – Sizes (3 each size) Junior / Women's Official / Official
- Cones – 8 cones 12" tall
- Floor Tape

NOTE: Equipment needs will be unique to your competition. Larger events will need more equipment. Be prepared.

Prize Structure

Locals

Participation certificates for all participants

Ribbons for 1st – 3rd place

Paper Certificate for 1st - 3rd Place - See host file for PDF Form and printable copy

Sectionals

Medals for 1st – 3rd place.

State Championship

Certificates for all participants

Staff and Participant Apparel

LEVEL	PARTICIPANTS	STAFF
Locals	Ribbons	N/A
Sectional	Medals	N/A
State Championship	TBD	N/A

Promotion

1. Distribute fliers and entry forms to all local newspapers, radio stations, television stations, schools (while still in session), council/board members, community/civic groups, service clubs and local basketball organizations. Add your agency name and logo to the flier and entry form in the designated places (see editable CARA Poster/Flier on Host FILE).
2. Publicize your local competition with surrounding communities if they are not already conducting a local CARA Skills Challenge.
3. Include a description of your local CARA Skills Challenge competition in your parks and recreation community brochure.
4. Prepare press release for your local papers, school newsletters, and local homeowner association newsletters (see press releases on host FILE).
5. Place entry forms in literature racks and at registration desks of all your facilities and at other appropriate community locations.
6. Emphasize that the CARA Skills Challenge program is free to participants, requires no special equipment, boys and girls have separate divisions and compete in their own age groups.

Therapeutic Recreation – TR Division

The Therapeutic division can be run separately or in conjunction with the traditional CARA Skills competition.

1. Agency Fee: CPRA Agency Fee: \$55
2. Age Divisions: Coed, the TR competition is open to boys and girls age as of April 30th of current year
Ages 6-13 Younger division
Ages 14-18 Older division
3. Rules (TR Adjustments)
 - a. 6-13 younger division – 8’ rim, junior size ball for all events
 - b. 14-18 older division – 10’ rim, intermediate ball for all events
 - c. Both divisions - shooting, one minute
 - d. Dribbling – use below results grid, if necessary, allow participant to follow a “runner” thru the dribbling skills

Seconds	Points
28.1-28.5	22.5
28.6-29.0	20
29.1-29.5	17.5
29.6-30.0	15
30.1-30.5	12.5
30.6-31.0	10
31.1-32.5	7.5
32.6-32.0	5
32.1+ up	2.5

4. TR participants can ELECT to use a larger ball, shoot at higher rim or pass from farther mark, if they choose to, unlike traditional participants.
5. Prize Structure:
 - a. Local: Participants certificates for all participants, ribbons for 1st-3rd place, top two places from each division advance to one of two sectionals
 - b. Sectional: Two sectionals North and South, top two winners of each division advance to state
 - c. State: Same as traditional participants
6. A person with a disability can participates in a traditional CARA Skills Challenge competition but a non-disabled player may not participate in the TR section.
7. Reporting scores or additional help running event contact TR coordinator, state director Chris Hopes 719-553-2680 or via email at chopes@pueblo.us.

