

2025-2026 HCAL Basketball Sports Plan

Date	Event	Location-Address
2/14/26	Houston Regional Championship	TBD
2/14/26	Austin Regional Championship	TBD
2/21/26	HCAL State Championship	TBD

Rules/Deadlines/District Alignments/Schedules & Standings:

- Please review all of this key information directly from our [HCAL Website](#).
- The *NFHS Basketball Officials Manual* will govern all rules not stated in this sport plan.

Game Day Logistics:

- Game Time
 - Review Official Game Schedule published on the [HCAL Website](#).
 - **Any request for game changes must be approved by the opposing team prior to the approval of the Director (requests must be submitted to the Director more than 3 business days prior to the scheduled game or they will not be considered for approval)**
 - A 15-minute grace period will be allowed before a game is called a forfeit if there is no prior communication with the opponent or HCAL Director.
 - If communication is provided by the away team, then there will be no forfeit, and adjustments will be made by officials to ensure games stay on time. (warmup will be limited and no more than a 30-minute grace period will be allowed)
 - Arrival more than 30 minutes with communication will be considered a forfeit.
- Game Play
 - Timeouts
 - 60 seconds = 3 per game
 - 30 seconds = 2 per game
 - Game Times
 - Varsity Games = 8 minutes per Quarter (8 min Half Time)
 - **MS Games = (4) 10-minute running clock quarters with the clock stopping at the last minute of each quarter (5 Minute Half Time)**

Team Fouls

- **Double bonus (2 free-throws) on the 5th common foul of every Quarter**
 - **Team Fouls will reset after every Quarter except in the 4th quarter where fouls roll over to overtime.**
- Overtime Rules
 - 1st Overtime – HS (Half of a Regular Quarter), MS (4-minute running clock, stops in the last minute)
 - 2nd Overtime – 3 min (HS) & 2 min (MS)- no running clock
 - 3rd Overtime & Beyond – 1 minute
 - Each Team will receive 1 additional full timeout per overtime period and all fouls and timeouts carry over.



- Uniforms Expectations
 - The home team should wear light-colored jerseys
 - The visitors shall wear dark colored jerseys
 - If any color switches are needed – this must be mutually agreed upon prior to the start of the game (failure to do so will require the team wearing the wrong color from the guidelines above to wear pennies)
 - [NFHS Basketball Uniforms Guidelines](#)
 - **Please reference Legal #'s in the guidelines**
- Administrator on Duty
 - The home team must provide an administrator on duty.
 - Teachers, School Admin, Athletic Director/Coordinators, Counselors, or Coaches could all be the Administrator on Duty – Individual must not be directly involved in the game
 - They must present themselves to teams and officials prior to the start of the game
 - Failure to do so will incur in an infraction and possible forfeiture
- Warm-Up
 - The court must be available a minimum of 30 minutes prior to the official start time for both teams
 - For back-to-back games: All programs will have 10 minutes in between games to warm up (clock starts after courts are cleared)
- Bench Expectations
 - During live play, only the 1 coach may be standing on the sideline. During dead play, any coach can stand.
 - Players can stand on the sideline during play if there is not enough seating on the bench (must be behind the bench) If there is enough seating, players must always be seated.
- Officials
 - Officials will be assigned/provided by HCAL for all district and playoff games.
 - Two HCAL certified officials will be used for both HS and MS.
 - HCAL is responsible for official payments for district and any playoff games.
 - Each school is responsible for referee payments for any additional non-district games.
- Official Ball
 - NFHS certified balls will be used for district play and playoffs
 - Home Team is responsible for providing the official game ball.
 - Both teams are responsible for bringing their own warm-up balls
- Official Scorekeeper and Clock Operator
 - Student managers or adults must be trained and must be provided by the home team for all district games.
 - If a suitable scorekeeper/clock operator is not provided, the home team will receive a forfeit.
 - Only the Official Scorekeeper and Clock Operator are allowed at the scoring table – unless mutually agreed upon by both teams
 - [Basketball Training Video](#)
 - Game Personnel should always be professional and refrain from cheering during game play.



- Game Personnel are part of the officiating crew & should act accordingly
- If both teams agreed to start regardless of the official personnel at the table – then the game will not be allowed to be protested.
- HCAL will provide the official scorekeeper and clock managers for all playoff & championship games
- Game Scores and Protests
 - The home team is responsible for entering the official scores into the HCAL website by noon of the next business day
 - Failure to do so will incur in an infraction
 - Protests and/or disagreements should be brought to the attention of both the liaison and HCAL Director within 24 hours of the end of the game.
 - Only Eligibility or Compliance will be considered for protests – Officials' calls/rulings are not allowed to be protested.
 - Discrepancies with scores will also be verified through the game officials' reports
 - **Game Scores** – It is the responsibility of the visiting team to review within that 24-hour period and inform the Director of any discrepancies.
 - **For forfeits, teams will receive a +10-point differential. (10-0)**
- Sportsmanship Rule
 - HCAL is not here to embarrass our participants during game play – therefore, we have implemented a sportsmanship rule
 - Any Team winning by 25 points or more at the beginning of the 2nd half of the contest should execute the following rules:
 - No Full Court Pressing or an aggressive half court man/press defense.
 - A running clock will be implemented (stopped for timeouts) – this does not apply to MS.
 - Once lead drops back to 15 points or under – the clock will function as normal.
 - Violations of the sportsmanship rule will follow the infractions listed below and a game report will be sent to the Director:
 - 1st Offense – Official will issues a verbal warning.
 - 2nd Offense – Official will administer a delay of game to the team.
 - 3rd Offense – Official will issue a Technical Foul to the Head Coach
 - 4th Offense – Official will issue the Coach a 2nd Technical Foul/Removed from the Game
 - **Spectators are not allowed to have noisemakers during game play and only positive language should be used by all stakeholders to cheer on their team.**
- Players Eligibility
 - Players must be listed (First & Last Name) on the official rosters submitted via Team Sideline
 - All basketball personnel must be on the roster as well. (coaches, managers, etc.)
 - Anyone not listed is ineligible from participation or sitting on the bench.
 - HCAL Requires Two Key Dates for Roster Submission:
 - At the start of the season



- Finalized prior to the start of the playoffs (1/29 for MS, 1/30 for HS)
- Roster changes will not be accepted after the playoff cutoff date.
- 8th Graders are allowed to play Varsity; however, they must have a [MS Request Form for HS Eligibility](#) on file
 - Once the 8th Grader Plays on the HS Team – they must remain on the HS Team for the remainder of the season
 - Official document must be submitted to the Director.
 - 6th and 7th Graders must participate in the middle school level divisions.
- K-5th Grade Students will not be allowed to participate in the HCAL MS nor HS divisions.
- HCAL will conduct an Informal Roster Check during the mid-point of the season.
 - This roster check will help Coaches/AD's/Athletic Coordinators prepare for the upcoming Playoff Games (infractions will be given and players will not be allowed to play if they are not listed on the roster)
 - The HCAL Director will provide further guidance the week prior with clear directions
- Per TEA Guidelines – athletes are only allowed to play 1 game per day, with a total of 2 games per week (except for tournaments)
 - Failure to adhere to this expectation will result in forfeitures of games

Game Day Operations:

- Admission Prices/Concessions
 - Host Schools are allowed to charge admissions and have concessions for home games during district play.
 - These prices should be communicated to all stakeholders prior to all games.
 - The expectation for all games is that there will be an admission fee.
- Expenses
 - The home team is responsible for the payment of athletic trainer/facility costs/security for home games during district play – highly recommended for all league games if possible.
 - HCAL will provide these vendors for all Regional /State Championship Games Only
 - Facilities – for teams without a home facility – games will need to be approved to be played away
 - If the opponent also does not have a home facility – it will be the responsibility of the scheduled home team to secure a facility
 - HCAL will provide the venues for all Championship Events
- Facilities
 - Any Teams without a home facility – will need to request to play their home games at the opposing teams location
 - Approval must be given by the opposing team, and documentation must be sent to the Director
 - If said team is listed as the Home Team, they are required to provide an Administrator on Duty at the site being utilized, even if it is not their home facility at their campus.
 - Both teams should solidify game management personnel and responsibilities

Playoff Format:

Houston (MS/Varsity)

- The First Round of the playoffs will be hosted by the winner of each district.



- The host School is responsible for providing Athletic Trainers/Security.
- HCAL will provide the officials & official book/clock personnel.
- **The Second Round/Regional Championships will be played at a neutral site.**
- HCAL will provide the officials & official book/clock personnel.

Houston – Varsity Divisions:

- Top 2- Teams from each district according to the district record
- Cross-District Format – Ex: (D1 vs. D3) (D2 vs. D4)
- Single Elimination
- Winner of the Regional Championship will represent Houston & play in the State Championship

MS Divisions (Houston):

- Top 2- Teams from each district according to the district record
- Cross-District Format – Ex: (D1 vs. D3) (D2 vs. D4)
- Single Elimination
- MS Divisions will only offer a Regional Championship Game

Austin– Varsity Divisions:

- Top 4 - Teams from each district according to the district record
- The higher seed for each district will host the first and second round games.
- Cross-District Format – Ex: (North vs. South)
 - Single Elimination
 - Host School is responsible for providing Athletic Trainers/Security
 - HCAL will provide the officials & official book/clock personnel.
 - The Regional Games will be played at a neutral site
 - Winner of the Regional Championship will move on to the HCAL State Championship Game

Austin– MS Divisions:

- Top 3 - Teams from each district according to the district record advance to the playoffs
- Cross-District Format – Ex: (North vs. South)
- Single Elimination
- The First Round of the playoffs
 - District Champs receive a 1st round bye
 - The 2 vs 3 matchup will be hosted by the higher seed.
 - Host School is responsible for providing Athletic Trainers/Security
 - HCAL will provide the officials & official book/clock personnel.
- The Second Round
 - Will be hosted by each of the District Champions.
 - Host School is responsible for providing Athletic Trainers/Security
 - HCAL will provide the officials & official book/clock personnel.
- Regional Championship Game – 3rd Round
 - Will be played at a neutral site.



Tiebreaker Policy – Playoff Qualifiers:

- Head - to - Head Results
- Lowest # of Forfeitures
- Head - to - Head Differentials (Max Point Differential per game +/- 25 pts)
- Highest Total Point Differential -District (Max Point Differential per game +/- 25 pts)
- Lowest Total Points Against- District
- Head – to – Group Differential among tied teams only (used for more than 2 Teams with a Tie)
 - (Max Point Differential per game +/- 25 pts)
- Head – to – Group Points Against among tied teams only (used for more than 2 Teams with a Tie)
 - (Max Point Differential per game +/- 25 pts)
- Highest Total Point Differential- District (Max Point Differential per game +/- 25 pts)
- Lowest Total Points Against – District
- Coin Flip – Live Recording

HCAL Honors & Awards:

- *Team Honors*
 - District Champions (HS Varsity & MS Divisions)
 - Regional Champions (HS Varsity & MS Divisions)
 - State Champions (HS Varsity Divisions Only)
- Individual Awards Listed Below – Varsity Division Only
 - *Individual Player (All-District)*
 - District Champs – Receive 3 nominations
 - 2nd Place – Receive 2 nominations
 - All other Teams – Receive 1 nomination
 - *Individual Player (All-Region)*
 - Regional Champs – Receives 3 nominations
 - Runner – Up Team – Receives 2 nominations
 - All other Playoff Teams – Receive 1 nomination
 - *Individual Player (All-State)*
 - State Champs – Receives 3 nominations
 - Runner – Up Team – Receives 2 nominations
 - *All-Academic Team*
 - Any athlete with a 3.75 GPA or higher during the season
 - *Coach of the Year Award*
 - Awarded to the Head Coach of the State Championship Team

A regional All-Star Game will be played tentatively a week after the State Championships with nominations based on standings.

Professional Dress – Coaches/Administrators:

- Business casual – school polos and nice khakis pants
- Jeans, T-shirts, cargo pants/shorts, tights, sweatpants, joggers, or shorts of any kind are **NOT Acceptable**
- Thank you all for always representing our schools/charter school network well!

