



Youth Basketball League Rules

2025 - 2026

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League Rules

1. Recreational Purpose

The basketball league is purposely designed to be a recreation program to provide a positive and development-focused experience for all participants. The primary goals are to teach the fundamentals of basketball, promote teamwork and sportsmanship, and ensure that every player has a positive experience.

2. League Administration

The Youth Recreational Basketball League is administered by the Celina Parks & Recreation Department.

3. Player Registration

All participants must be officially registered with the league prior to taking part in any practices or games. This includes completing the league's registration form, submitting any required waivers, and paying the applicable registration fee by the stated deadline. Players must be assigned to a team roster by league staff to be eligible for participation. No unregistered or unofficial players will be permitted to play under any circumstances.

4. Coach Registration & Background Checks

To ensure a safe and positive environment for all participants, all head coaches and assistant coaches are required to complete a background check prior to the start of the season. This process must be completed and approved by the league before any coach is permitted to lead practices or participate in games. Background checks help the league maintain the highest standards of safety and accountability for our youth athletes.

5. Players

- a. All players must be officially registered with the league and assigned to a team roster to participate in practices or games.
- b. Each player is expected to demonstrate good sportsmanship, respect for coaches, referees, teammates, and opponents, and a willingness to learn and grow in a team environment. Players must adhere to league rules and guidelines, and participation may be limited or revoked if behavior is deemed unsafe or

unsportsmanlike. The league is committed to providing a fun, inclusive, and development-focused experience for all youth athletes.

6. Pre-Season Skills Assessment

- a. All players who complete registration will be placed on a team.
- b. In attempt to evenly distribute players of all skill levels, a skill assessment will be scheduled for all players. This is not mandatory but is highly encouraged. Players unable to attend should notify league staff.
- c. The assessment generally is conducted by a third-party and consists of a few fundamental aspects of the game, such as dribbling, passing, and shooting.
- d. These scores will be shared with all coaches during the team formation process.

7. Team Formation & Player Draft

- a. If a head coach cannot attend a draft, a representative should attend with league director approval.
- b. In the event that the number of players/teams in a division does not best accommodate a snake draft, league director or designee can form teams with the best interest of players in mind.
- c. Draft order is determined by league director's discretion of fairness, such as picking numbers on paper out of a hat, drawing straws, etc.
- d. Children of head coach and assistant coaches are protected from the draft.
- e. A total of 4 protected players are allowed (including coaches' kids) and must be confirmed no less than 24 hours before the draft starts.
- f. Confirmation is made through a two-step process.
 - i. First, the head coach submits to league staff their four protected players, indicating the children of the head coach and assistant coach.
 - ii. Then, the parents of the player to be protected will be instructed by the coach to send an email to league staff confirming the protected status of their child to the coach.

8. Rosters

- a. League will target a total of 8 players per team (exceptions based on number of players or special circumstances can be made with league director approval).
- b. Teams are limited to 12 players on their roster. Under special circumstances, teams may petition the league for an exemption to the 12-player limit.

- c. No player can play in two games simultaneously. Once the player has participated in a game, the game must be completed before participating in another game. (This would happen in the event of a player “playing up” a grade, either permanently or as a guest player during the regular season.)

9. Uniforms

- a. All uniforms shall have numbers on the back (6”) and numbers on the front.
- b. Numbers may be up to 2 digits (00-99). Reversible uniforms are recommended but not required.
- c. When possible, the home team should wear white (light) colors. In a color conflict (two teams wearing a similar color shirt), the team in violation will need to wear an alternate uniform (or cover mesh jerseys if available).

10. Practice

- a. Practices are scheduled to accommodate coach availability as best as possible.
- b. Generally, younger teams are scheduled for the earlier practice times. Exceptions are made to this, such as if a coach is responsible for multiple teams.
- c. All teams will practice a minimum of once a week. Two practice spots are allocated as facility space allows. This may be achieved by having 2 or more teams share a court.
- d. Though it is not required, often coaches will start the season with two practices a week and then cut back to once a week once games have started.

11. Games

- a. All teams will be scheduled for eight (8) regular season games.
- b. Games for the kinder, 1st, and 2nd grade divisions will all be played at Celina ISD facilities.
- c. Saturday is the standard gameday for all regular season games.

12. Schedules

- a. Practice schedules will be posted on a monthly basis, no later than one week before the start of each month.
- b. This is done to accommodate for one-off changes to facility availability due to preset Celina ISD programming.

- c. All practice schedules will be communicated directly with each Head Coach to then relay to their teams.
- d. The game schedule will be posted no later than two weeks prior to the first scheduled Saturday gameday.
- e. Game schedules for Kinder, 1st, and 2nd grade can be found on the City's Team Sideline website: <https://www.teamsideline.com/sites/celinatxparks/home>
- f. Game schedules for 3rd grade and above will be posted on the Fieldhouse USA website: <https://fieldhouseusa.com/>

13. Playoffs

- a. Playoffs begin with the 2nd grade division.
- b. General expectation is that the top four teams in each division will advance to a single elimination playoff bracket..
- c. No guest players are eligible to play in any playoff games.
- d. Tiebreakers will be addressed in this order:
 - i. Winning Percentage
 - ii. Head-To-Head
 - iii. Head-To-Head Differential
 - iv. Total Points Scored
 - v. Total Points Allowed
 - vi. Total Points Differential
 - vii. Lowest Number of Forfeits
 - viii. Coin Toss

14. Make-Up Games

- a. Makeup games, when applicable, could be added to a Saturday schedule which would create doubleheaders, or could be arranged for a weeknight if certain conditions are met (such as but not limited to teams agreeing, referee availability, and facility availability.)
- b. Reasons for a game cancellation include but are not limited to: weather conditions impacting travel, unexpected facility closure, requested game change by both teams involved due to a school function or other event.

15. Holidays & Blackout Dates

- a. Generally. games will not be played for two weekends of the traditional ISD Christmas Break.

- b. There will be no league-scheduled practices during this break due to closures of the ISD facilities.
- c. Teams are still allowed to practice if they have a safe location that does not require anyone to pay rental fees.

16. Referees

- a. Referees will be selected by the league director.
- b. Two (2) referees per game will be scheduled. More can be approved if deemed necessary.
- c. Referees are encouraged to call the game based on the league rules, while considering their DISCRETION in calls made according to the age and grade/division of the players and their skill level. Examples include, but are not limited to traveling, double dribbles, and fouls (vs instructional warnings).
 - i. For the youngest divisions, this can be encouraging them to dribble the ball while not calling traveling to help the little ones learn the game and have fun.
 - ii. However, should a player simply run the ball like a running back from beyond the 3-point line to the hoop and score, travel should be called.

17. Disciplinary Action

- a. Disciplinary action may be taken against a coach/player for violation of the rules. Depending on the severity of the infractions, a recommendation may be made to suspend the coach/player for the remainder of the season or ban the coach/player from all league sponsored events.
- b. Fighting will not be tolerated. Players or coaches who fight, start or attempt to instigate a fight will be expelled from further league play.
- c. Violation of playing-time rules is not tolerated. League staff will investigate all suspected playing time violations. If it is determined that a coach violated the playing time requirements, then the coach will be counseled on the rules. Any further violation will result in an automatic one (1) week suspension for the violator. It is understood that “one week” means “the week of the next scheduled game.” A coach, who continues to violate the playing time rules, may result in additional suspension or immediate replacement of the coach.
- d. Two (2) technical fouls against a player or coach will result in ejection from the game. Any ejection also carries an automatic one (1) week suspension. The

suspension will be served in the next scheduled week. It is understood that “one week” means “the week of the next scheduled game.”

- e. Two ejections in a season will result in immediate removal of the offending player or coach from further league play. League commissioners have the right to impose further punishment if they deem it necessary.
- f. Any spectator who demonstrates rude or abusive behavior will be required to leave the game site immediately. They may cause their team’s head coach to be assessed a technical foul.

18. Cancellations

- a. Cancellations and forfeits should be communicated as soon as possible to notify other teams and referees.
- b. Coaches should notify the league director of the situation. Cancellations made less than 48 hours from game time will not be rescheduled and will be a forfeit loss for the cancelling team by a score of 15-0.
- c. Only the league director can approve a rescheduled game and good cause must be given.

19. Protests

- a. The only protest heard by the league is for ineligible players. Coaches may not protest a referee’s judgment call. During the regular season, all protests must be submitted in writing to league personnel within 48 hours of the game in question. During playoffs and tournaments, the time between games does not allow for the normal protest process.2.) Roster checks can only be requested by a head coach.
- b. Roster checks can only be performed at the following times:
 - i. Prior to start of game
 - ii. End of 1st or 2nd quarter
- c. If a roster check is requested, both teams’ rosters will be verified by a league staff member or authorized person on-site.
- d. If the roster check was asked for in-game and after rosters have been checked and all players are found to be eligible to play, the requesting team’s coach will receive a technical foul (delay of game technical). Opposing team will then shoot two free throws and receive the ball.
- e. If roster check was asked for before the game started and all players are found to be eligible to play, the requesting team’s coach will receive a technical foul

(delay of game) and the opposing team will start the game shooting two free throws and receive the ball.

Team Rules

1. Coaches

- a. Every team will have one assigned Head Coach. An assistant coach is not required but is strongly encouraged.
- b. All formal coaches – anyone to be involved with the players in any capacity – must complete the background check process as assigned by league staff.
- c. If a head coach cannot make a practice or a game and the event is still to proceed, league staff must be notified.
- d. Only two coaches are allowed on the team bench during a game.
- e. If a head coach is ejected from a game and there is no formal assistant coach. Staff must be notified immediately in effort to find a background-checked person to sit in. If no person is found in a timely manner, the affected team will lose by forfeit no matter the score at the time of the ejection.

2. Roster

- a. League will target a total of 8 players per team but no less (exceptions based on number of players or special circumstances can be made with league director approval.
- b. Teams are limited to 12 players on their roster. Under special circumstances, teams may petition the league for an exemption to the 12-player limit.
- c. No player can play in two games simultaneously. Once the player has participated in a game, the game must be completed before participating in another game.

3. Mandatory Playing Time

- a. Coaches are responsible for ensuring that all players meet their grade-specific rules. Parents, if concerned about their child's playing time, should talk with the head coach before coming to league staff.
- b. A coach who has a dispute over playing time must bring the infraction to the attention of the referees / site admin.

4. Guest Players

- a. In the event a team only has 4 or 5 players for a game, 1 or 2 guest players will be allowed to play, so long as they are approved by league staff.
- b. Guest players must be registered players with this league and must be from a grade below that of the team needing the player.
- c. If rostered players show up, bringing the team to 6 total players, then one guest player is no longer eligible to play from that point forward in the game.
- d. Max of two guest players allowed.
- e. Individual players may only play on one team per grade. They may play in the grade they are currently in and up a grade, but NOT on two teams in the same grade. It does not matter if the teams are in different divisions.
- f. It is against the coach's code of conduct for sportsmanship to seek out specific guest players to help win games. The intent of guest players is to avoid forfeits and allow for rest during games.

General Game Rules

1. Home Team

- a. The home is the first team listed on the game schedule, if not otherwise identified.

2. Scorekeeping

- a. The home team provides the official scorekeeper and keeps the official scorebook.
- b. Enhanced scorekeeping is encouraged. Points and fouls tracked by player along with a box score (points scored and fouls per quarter) will need to be recorded. Technical fouls by player and coach (including those assessed to the head coach but committed by others) need to be recorded as well as any ejections.

3. Clock Management

- a. The visiting team provides a capable volunteer to manage the game clock, scoreboard & possession arrow.

4. Forfeit

- a. A team must have a minimum of 4 players and 1 coach to start the game.

- b. If a team is unable to field a team (4 players and 1 coach) within 5 minutes of the scheduled game time, the game will be forfeited.
- c. Forfeited games will not be rescheduled.

5. Bench

- a. Only eligible players and coaches (limit 2) are permitted on the bench side of the gym. During the game, coaches are not permitted on the court and must stay within the bench area.
- b. Referees may require that coaches remain seated. Failure to follow the referees' instructions may result in a technical foul. After the first technical, the coach must remain seated on the bench.
- c. Only head coaches can address the referees during the game. If a referee considers an assistant coach's approach/address to be inappropriate, the head coach should receive a verbal warning, followed by a technical foul assessed to the head coach.

6. Game Time

- a. See specific age group rules.

7. Ten Second Rule

- a. There is no backcourt pressure in grades kindergarten – 2nd grade.

8. Possession

- a. All divisions will start the game with a center jump ball.
- b. For all subsequent quarters, teams will inbound the ball at mid-court.
- c. The timekeeper will maintain the possession arrow.
- d. Teams will start the game shooting at the goal located at the opposite end of their bench.
- e. At the beginning of the 3rd quarter, teams will shoot at the goal located adjacent to their bench.
- f. Overtime periods start with a center jump ball.

9. Substitutions

- a. Prior to entering the game, all players must report to the scorer's table.
- b. Officials will signal the player(s) into the game.

10. Time Outs

- a. Each team is allowed two (2) timeouts per half.
- b. Each timeout will be forty-five (45) seconds in length.
- c. For overtime (where applicable), each team gets one (1) timeout per overtime period.
- d. Time outs do not carry over to the next half or into overtime.

11. Defensive Pressure

- a. If defensive pressure is limited to anything other than full court press, the defending team cannot gain possession of the ball until defensive pressure is allowed.
- b. For example, if defensive pressure is limited to half-court, the defending team cannot steal or gain possession of the ball until the ball has passed half court.
- c. For example, if the ball hits the player's foot while they bring the ball up and it rolls away, the ball cannot be picked up by the defending team until it passes half court. If the ball is otherwise mishandled and goes out of bounds on the offense, travel or double dribble is called etc., then the defense is awarded the ball.

12. Fouls

- a. Individual Fouls:
 - i. kinder and 1st grade = no individual fouls kept (only team fouls)
 - ii. 2nd grade: player must leave the game after receiving their fifth foul.
- b. Team Fouls: Team fouls in a game reset with each quarter. Teams will shoot (2) two free throws when fouled at five (5) team fouls per quarter reached by the other team. Individual foul rules are not impacted by this.

13. Technical Fouls

- a. Result in two (2) free throws and loss of possession. Two (2) technical fouls against a player or coach will result in ejection from the game. Players must leave the bench and go to their parents. (If the only parent present is the coach, then the player will stay on the bench).
- b. If coach is ejected, they must immediately leave the playing area and either (a) the assistant coach will serve as the head coach, or (b) a parent must step in and league staff must be notified before the game can resume. In this scenario,

if no parent steps up to act as coach on the bench, the game will be declared a forfeit-loss for the team in violation, regardless of the score at the time.

- c. Technical fouls assessed for inappropriate behavior by the fans or bench will be assessed to the head coach.

14. Foul Shots

- a. A player occupying a marked lane space may enter the lane on the release of the ball by the free throw shooter. Shooter and players behind free throw line may enter when the ball hits the rim.
- b. If the ball on the shot does not hit the rim, play will be stopped and the ball will be given to the non-shooting team, taken out under the basket.

15. Ejections

- a. Any ejection will result in a one game suspension to be served at the next scheduled regular or postseason game. See General Basketball Policies – Disciplinary Action section.

16. Overtime

- a. Regular season games can end in a tie. No overtime period will be played.
- b. For postseason games that end in a tie, after the first overtime, a second overtime period will be played with an adjusted format of “next to score wins” with 3 minutes on the clock.

Specific Division Rules

Kindergarten and 1st Grade Divisions

1. General Guidelines

- a. Basket Height: 8 ft
- b. Ball Size: Junior Ball (27.5")
- c. Score is not kept.
- d. Game Time
 - i. Four (4) quarters consisting of eight (8) minutes per quarter with a running clock.
- e. Clock Stoppage
 - i. Clock stops near the 4-minute mark of each quarter to be utilized for substitution purposes.
 - ii. Clock stops on time outs.
 - iii. Clock stops on referee discretion.

2. Mandatory Playing Time Requirements

- a. Teams with ten (10) or less players: Each player must play 50% of each half.
- b. Teams with more than ten (10) players: Each player must play an equitable amount of time.
- c. These rules may be waived under the following circumstances:
 - i. If a player arrives after the start of the game but before the start of the second half, the coach must play the player 50% of the second half and is not obligated to play the player in the first half.
 - ii. If a player arrives after the start of the second half, the coach is not obligated to play the player.

3. Ball Handling Violations

- a. For Kinder-1st grade, referees will allow 3-4 double dribbles and 3-4 steps on a travel (when ball is in the front court).
- b. If in violation of the rules, referees will explain violation to participant and ball is awarded to opposing team.
- c. Referees have discretion so long as they are consistent. We want this age to be instructional. We cannot call every single violation; the purpose is to learn. Refer to Team Rules – Referees section.

4. Defensive Pressure

- a. Must play man-to-man defense using color wristbands.
- b. No defensive pressure in the backcourt. Once ball control has been established on a rebound, the defensive team must release.
- c. Initial defensive pressure is not allowed until the ball passes the 3-point line. The team on offense must make a timely attempt to advance the ball across the 3-point line, or the referee will call a held ball and award the ball to the other team. After the ball carrier's initial penetration of the 3-point line, defensive pressure is allowed for the entire half-court until change of possession.
- d. The team on offense must make a timely attempt to advance the ball across the 3-point line or the referee will call a held ball and award the ball to the other team.
- e. Defensive pressure violations will result in the ball being given back to the offensive team. Repetitive violations will result in report to league staff for review.
- f. Double-teams are not allowed.
- g. No stealing at this age group. Players cannot steal the ball off the dribble or on a pass.
- h. When a team is up by 10 points or more, they are not allowed to steal the ball on a dribble or a pass.

5. Other Notes

- a. Three-second lane violations are NOT called.
- b. Technical fouls may be called on coaches or bench.
- c. Shots made behind the three-point line will count as three (3) points.
- d. No playoffs (begins with 2nd grade).

2nd Grade Division

1. General Guidelines

- a. Basket Height: 9ft.
- b. Ball Size: Junior Ball (27.5")
- c. Score is kept.
- d. Game Time
 - i. Four (4) quarters consisting of eight (8) minutes per quarter with a running clock.

2. Clock Stoppage

- a. Clock stops near the 4-minute mark of each quarter to be utilized for substitution purposes.
- b. Clock stops on time outs.
- c. Clock stops on referee discretion.
- d. Referee may use discretion to limit substitutions in the 4th quarter during close games.
 - i. If the game is in the 4th quarter with 2 minutes or less remaining, and at any point therein the game is within 5 or fewer points, standard clock stoppage rules for whistled plays begin and do not end until the game ends.
 - ii. If a team is up by more than 20 points, the scoreboard should no longer display the score, but the book should continue to record as normal.

3. Mandatory Playing Time Requirements

- a. Teams with ten (10) or less players: Each player must play 50% of each half.
- b. Teams with more than ten (10) players: Each player must play an equitable amount of time.
- c. These rules may be waived under the following circumstances:
 - i. If a player arrives after the start of the game but before the start of the second half, the coach must play the player 50% of the second half and is not obligated to play the player in the first half.
 - ii. If a player arrives after the start of the second half, the coach is not obligated to play the player.

4. Ball Handling Violations

- a. For 2nd Grade, referees will allow 1 double dribble and 1 extra step on a travel while outside the three-point line. Inside the three-point line, will be called as regulation basketball.
- b. If in violation of the rules, referees will explain violation to participant and ball is awarded to opposing team.
- c. Referees have discretion so long as they are consistent. We want this age to be instructional. We cannot call every single violation; the purpose is to learn. Refer to Team Rules – Referees section.

5. Defensive Pressure

- a. No defensive pressure in the backcourt. Once ball control has been established on a rebound, the defensive team must release.
- b. Initial defensive pressure is not allowed until the ball passes the volleyball line, or 5 feet beyond the 3-point line if no volleyball line present. The team on offense must make a timely attempt to advance the ball across the volleyball line or the referee will call a held ball and award the ball to the other team. After the ball carrier's initial penetration of the volleyball line, defensive pressure is allowed for the entire half-court until change of possession.
- c. Defensive pressure violations will result in the ball being given back to the offensive team.
- d. Man-to-man is the only permissible defense.
- e. Double-teams are not allowed
- f. When a team is up by 10 points or more, they are not allowed to steal the ball on a dribble or a pass on a live ball (meaning an inbounds pass could still be stolen in the front-court.)

6. Other Notes

- a. Foul Shots for 2nd grade are taken 2 feet in front of the standard free throw line.
- b. Three-second lane violations are not called.
- c. Technical fouls may be called on coaches or bench.
- d. Shots made behind the three-point line will count as three (3) points.

7. Playoffs

- a. The top four teams will advance to a single-elimination playoff bracket.

- b. Generally this will be played in one day with the goal of allowing at least one hour break for any team before playing the championship.

Use of Celina ISD Facilities

Youth basketball at any level could not happen in Celina without the support of Celina ISD in providing facilities for practices and games. We are privileged to be able to utilize Celina ISD facilities and must adhere to all rules and regulations which have been established. The general rule of thumb will be to leave it better than we find it, and limit foot traffic to the gyms and the bathrooms.

1. All spectators shall enter/exit the most direct means to the gym and at no time allowed to wander about the school premises.
2. Parents are responsible for the behavior of their children at all times while they are on school grounds.
3. NO food in the gym for spectators. Player drinks must be in a sealed container.
4. NO chewing gum or tobacco products on any gym premises.
5. Taunting, baiting or profane language is not allowed and could result in ejection from the facility.
6. Jewelry and sharp objects CANNOT be worn on the basketball courts. This includes, but not limited to watches, earrings, necklaces, rings and berets. Any medical or religious jewelry can be worn if approved by the league commissioners: however, it must be securely taped down.
7. At no time should anyone attempt to climb or hang on the wall system surrounding any of the courts or practice areas.
8. All participants, coaches, and spectators must behave in a respectful manner with the spirit of FAIR PLAY, not only towards the referees, but also towards administrators, opponents, teammates and spectators.
9. Per state law, no firearms or weapons may be brought into school facilities.