

SECTION TWO

THE LEVELS OF UPWARD BASKETBALL



The Levels of Upward Basketball

Upward Basketball uses a four-level age appropriate format that grows with each young athlete. Each level of Upward Basketball is tailored to meet athletes where they are in their playing ability, allowing them to reach their full potential.



Each level of Upward Basketball includes a specific game format and rules. Levels 1-3 use a set of common rules with modifications designed for each level. However, Level 4 uses an exclusive set of rules that follow a traditional middle school format.

Basic Rules for Levels 1& 2 (Kindergarten thru 2nd grade)

Game Format

1. Church staff will lead both teams in prayer at center court before every game. This sets the tone and focus for the game.
2. A coin flip or other impartial method determines which team receives possession first. In jump ball situations, possessions will alternate. This promotes fairness for both teams while adhering to the NFHS rule for jump ball situations.
3. Clock format: Running clock throughout the game, stopping only for pre-determined substitutions at the end of each segment and halftime.
4. At the end of each segment, the team that receives the ball next is based upon the direction of the possession arrow. This avoids the offensive team that may have possession in the next segment from stalling at the end of a period.
5. All coaches will adhere to the substitution system. The substitution system allows for equal playing time for all players.
6. There are no timeouts. This allows more playing time and keeps the games on time.
7. Teams switch goals at halftime. This rule is in compliance with NFHS Rules. It also evens any advantage that may occur because of the court.
8. Any game ending in a tie should remain in a tie. No overtimes are played so games stay on schedule.
9. Standings add unneeded pressure to the game and therefore will not be maintained.

Rules for Play

Defense

1. Man-to-man defense will be played at all times. Zone defenses are not allowed in Levels 1-3. In a man-to-man defense, players are only guarding the opponent that closely matches their ability and height. This allows for a more competitive system for every player on the court while creating an equal opportunity for each player.
2. Defensive players must stay within arm's reach of the player they are guarding. This prevents defenders from sagging or crowding an area of the court to gain a defensive advantage.
3. Double-teaming is not allowed. However, help defense is strongly encouraged in the following instances:
 - Lane Area: If a defender is in the lane and the player he or she is guarding is within arm's reach, the defender is allowed to provide help defense. Since many goals are scored in the lane, it provides the defense more opportunity to properly defend this area.
 - Picks and Screens: Defensive switching is allowed on offensive picks or screens. The non-screened defender can help his or her teammate by temporarily switching until the teammate recovers to defend their offensive

player. This is commonly referred to as "help and recover." This prevents the offense from continually setting screens to gain an advantage.

- Fast Breaks: When an offensive player has beaten their defender, another defensive player may help. Upon stopping the fast break, defenders should return to guarding their assigned players. This rule is meant to prevent the defenders from helplessly watching the offensive player score without being able to help.
- 4. At the beginning of each segment, players will line up at half court and "match up" with whom they are guarding. This act is performed to promote equal player match-ups. Equal match-ups combined with man-to-man defense create five competitive pairings on the court.
- 5. Full court presses are not allowed. Defensive players may not guard their opponents in the backcourt. This will allow for more play to occur in the front court and create an equal opportunity for each child to participate both on offense and defense.
- 6. Due to the shortness of the court, backcourt violations will not be called. If playing on a regulation-size court (84 feet) as opposed to cross-court, backcourt violations should be called.
- 7. A player committing two fouls in one segment must sit out the remainder of that segment. The next player in the rotation comes in as the substitute and is rewarded some extra game time. This does not change the normal rotation as the fouled-out player does not re-enter the game until he or she is scheduled to do so. This rule allows the offending player time to regroup during the remainder of the segment while realizing that there is a consequence for the violation.

Offense

1. The offense must purposefully attack the defense in every situation – no stalling. After a warning from the referee, a violation will be called resulting in a turnover. This will prevent a team with the lead from running the clock out by staying in the backcourt.
2. Isolation plays will not be a part of Levels 1-3 because they take away the opportunity for improvement for all players and contradict the spirit of the rules.
3. Non-shooting fouls will result in the ball being inbounded from either the baseline, sideline or "up-top".
4. No score will be given for a basket in the wrong goal. It will be treated as a turnover. This will prevent further embarrassing a player for making this mistake.

Level 1 Modifications (Kindergarten)

Rule	Explanation/Comments
Goal Height	7.5 feet
Ball Size	27.5"
Games consist of six, 5-minute segments and an 8 minute halftime. One minute is allotted for substitutions between segments.	This keeps games to approximately an hour time frame.
Score is NOT kept.	The focus of this age is to learn fundamentals, not winning and losing.
3-second violation is NOT called.	Referees should advise players of this potential violation but not penalize.
Coaches are allowed on the floor with players.	The focus is for coaches to instruct and encourage players at all times.
Stealing the ball from the dribbler is NOT allowed.	To encourage the offensive player to dribble with correct form without the pressure of having the ball stolen.
Stealing the ball off a pass is NOT allowed.	To encourage the offensive player to pass with correct form without the pressure of having the ball stolen.
Violation is NOT called for having two hands on the ball while dribbling.	Due to limited hand-eye coordination, this allows a player to establish correct dribbling form through rhythm and pressure on the ball.
Rule	Explanation/Comments
Violation for double dribbling is called but does NOT result in a turnover.	Players should learn the concept of double dribble but should be allowed the opportunity to correct it without penalty.
Violation for traveling is called but does NOT result in a turnover.	Players should learn the concept of traveling but should be allowed the opportunity to correct it without penalty.
Violation for traveling is NOT called when a player shuffles feet when trying to set up for a shot.	Because this age group is single skill focused, players will tend to shuffle their feet when focusing on setting up for a shot. This is corrected as the player develops in skill as he gets older.
Fast breaks are NOT allowed in any transition situation.	This promotes a controlled game. Players at this age learn better when the pace is controlled.

Shooting fouls do NOT result in free throw attempts.	A player who gets fouled while shooting gets to retry his/her shot from the spot of the foul without being defended. Ball is live after shot is attempted. This allows a player to attempt a shot that he was trying to take prior to the foul from the same spot.
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Level 2 Modifications (1st & 2nd Grade)

Rule	Explanation/Comments
Goal Height	8.5 feet
Ball Size	27.5"
Games consist of six, 5-minute segments and an 8 minute halftime. One minute is allotted for substitutions between segments.	This keeps games to approximately an hour time frame.
Score is NOT kept.	Young athletes at this age should not focus on the score but rather the developmental skills being taught.
3-second violation is NOT called.	Young athletes at this age should focus on offensive basics (dribbling, passing, shooting, and rebounding).
Coaches are allowed on the floor with players.	The focus is for coaches to instruct and encourage players at all times.
Shooting fouls do NOT result in free throw attempts.	A player who gets fouled while shooting gets to retry his/her shot from the spot of the foul without being defended. Ball is live after shot is attempted. This allows a player to attempt a shot that he was trying to take prior to the foul from the same spot.
Rule	Explanation/Comments
Stealing the ball off a dribble is NOT allowed.	Players at this age should be taught and held to these basic basketball rules.
Stealing the ball off the pass is allowed.	
Double dribble violation is called in all circumstances.	
Traveling violation is called in all circumstances.	

Fast breaks are allowed in any transition situation.