



Youth Basketball

League Guidelines



2025-2026

General:

1. The goal and objective of the league is to provide enjoyment and instruction of the game of basketball. Good sportsmanship and basic fundamentals should be stressed by all coaches. The sole purpose of winning should be played down. An atmosphere of learning and relaxation is the focus of this program.
2. The matters concerning the league of rule interpretation shall be administered the Apex Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources (APR&CR) Department.
3. All volunteer coaches shall be selected by APR&CR.
4. All new players shall be selected by the coaches at the pre-season draft. All players returning from the year before will remain on the same team (unless they request otherwise). Sisters/brothers shall be placed on the same team.
5. All coaches shall attend each practice or have his/her assistant attend in his/her place. Players shall not be allowed to practice without supervision.
6. No player shall be dropped from a team without the approval of the Recreation Department. Coaches shall report to the Recreation Department any player that misses practice repeatedly.
7. If a team roster drops below 10, the first player on the waiting list may be placed on the team by the Recreation Department.

8. 9-10 leagues and above will play an 8-game regular season. There will be a single elimination end of season tournament for the 9-10 leagues and above.
9. The 7-8 league will play a 9-game regular season. No scores/standings are kept in the 7-8 instructional league.

Apex Parks and Recreation Parental Code of Conduct

- Exhibit socially acceptable behavior at practice sessions, games, and matches or refrain from attending these events.
- Ensure that your children have the proper equipment.
- Ensure that your children arrive and are picked up at the stated time.
- Applaud all good effort and good plays or remain silent.
- Allow the coaches to instruct without outside interference or influence.
- Support the coaches in what they want the players to learn.
- Treat the coaches and league leaders with dignity and respect.
- Ensure that your children receive ample positive encouragement regardless of the outcome of their events.
- Allow your children to play without negative pressure, verbal or physical.
- Ensure that your children do not intentionally injure other players.
- Help your children adhere to the written and unwritten rules of honesty, fair play and good sportsmanship.
- Assist in helping other players, the team, or the program when asked.
- When possible, provide your children with extra instructional opportunities.
- When possible, provide your children with opportunities to learn other sports so that they have a more balanced development.

Behavior Management Policy- APR&CR strives to provide a safe, positive, and inclusive environment where all participants can enjoy and benefit from programs and activities. Participants are expected to behave appropriately and demonstrate respect for others, staff, equipment, and facilities at all times. APR&CR Staff use behavior management tools such as praise, modeling, redirection, and positive reinforcement to encourage appropriate behavior. These tools aim to help participants demonstrate self-control, problem-solving skills, and respect for others. Our programs will create an environment that encourages positive choices through understanding participants' basic needs and explaining program expectations. In the event praise and positive reinforcement do not accomplish the desired outcomes or in the event the behavior is such that more definitive action is needed, APR&CR will address the behavior according to its type and severity.

1. Disruptive Behaviors (e.g. refusal to follow directions, disrespecting staff, interrupting activities): Staff will use behavior management tools. Continued behaviors will result in a verbal warning, written incident reports, and progressive consequences, up to and including suspension from the program.
2. Aggressive and/or Destructive Behaviors (e.g. hitting, biting, vandalism, throwing objects): The participant will be separated from the group, and parents/guardians (if applicable) will be contacted to pick up the participant immediately. Depending on the situation, the participant may be suspended while the incident is reviewed. Severe cases or situations involving immediate danger will result in calling 911.
3. Illegal Behaviors: 911 will be called immediately, and the participant will be suspended from all programs pending review.
4. Unsportsmanlike Behaviors (e.g. harassment, fighting or disrespect during games): May result in warnings, ejection, and suspension from current and/or future games or seasons.

Special Considerations: For participants whose behavior is connected to a disability, Specialized Recreation and Inclusion Staff may develop an inclusion plan outlining strategies for support and communication. However, all participants are expected to engage respectfully and safely in programs and activities.

Behavior Incident Reports:

1. A First Written Behavior Incident Report results in participants being removed from the program for the remainder of the day.
2. A Second Written Behavior Report results in the participant being asked to leave and removed from the program for at least one full day.
3. A Third Written Behavior Report will result in the participant being asked to leave and suspended for the remainder of the program. APR&CR reserves the right to remove or suspend participants when behaviors compromise the safety or enjoyment of others. No refunds or credits will be issued for days when a participant is suspended or removed.

Eligibility:

Playing age will be determined based on a player's age February 28, 2026. Players will not be permitted to play up or down an age division.

Roster:

Each team shall consist of a maximum of ten (10) players, a head coach and no more than two assistant coaches.

Gym Rules:

1. Do not bring your own basketballs for games. All basketballs will be provided for all games.
2. Parents must supervise children not participating in practices or games at all times.
3. Teams shall sit on the sideline near the scorer's table during games.
4. No one is allowed on any athletic equipment (mats, volleyball stands, etc.) in the gym. Violators shall be asked to leave the gym after one (1) warning.

Playing Rules & Regulations:

This league shall be governed by the 2025-2026 North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) basketball rules with the following notations and exceptions:

1. Only three (3) coaches and team players allowed on the team bench.
2. Three (3) minutes of warm up prior to start of game.
3. Five (5) minutes for halftime break.
4. Games will be played with a running clock except the last two minutes of the game. Clock will stop only on free throws, time-outs, mid-quarter breaks for substitutions and unusual delays (injury, lost ball, etc.)
 - a. The final two (2) minutes of the game and overtime periods will be regulation clock.
 - i. Clarification: The clock does not stop due to a made basket in the last two minutes, or any other point in the game. Only on dead balls or timeouts.
5. If the game is tied at the end of regulation, a one (1) minute overtime period will be played. If there is still a tie, the game will end as a tie (regular season). For tournament games,

overtimes will be three (3) minutes in length. Multiple overtimes will be played until there is a winner.

Equipment and Timing

	Pee Wee (7-8)	Mites (9-10)	Major (11-12)	Junior (13-14/15) & Senior (15-16)
Height of goal	8 ½ Ft	9 Ft	10 Ft	10 Ft
Ball Size	Women's (28.5")	Women's (28.5")	Women's (28.5")	Men's (29.5" for boys, Women's (28.5") for girls
Free-throw line	12 Ft	12 Ft	15 Ft	15 Ft
Length of Game	8-minute quarters			
Lane Violations	5 seconds	5 seconds	3 seconds	3 seconds

1. Substitutions

- a. First, second, and third quarters – The horn will sound midway through each quarter for mandatory substitutions. The horn will sound on a dead ball, made basket, or defensive rebound, whichever comes first. This is the only substitution break for the quarter.
- b. Fourth quarter – Free substitutions will be permitted in the fourth quarter.
- c. Players will be required to check in at the scorer's table prior to entering into the game. This includes all mandatory substitutions, time-outs and between periods along with during actual play.
- d. Exceptions – Exceptions to the mandatory playing rule will be made in the case of the following:
 - i. A player becomes ill or injured.
 - ii. A player is removed for conduct (including fouling out).
 - iii. A player arrives for a game after the completion of one quarter.
- e. Discipline – If a coach requests to discipline a player for the length of or any duration during a game the coach must submit a letter in writing to APRCR explaining the reason for the disciplinary action and subsequent suspension.

- f. Violations – Failure to adhere to any portion of the playing time rule will result in a mandatory one-game suspension for a coach to be served during his/her team’s next scheduled game.

2. **Mandatory Playing Time**

- a. Minimum: each player must play at least 12 minutes (3 sub-quarters). This must be met by the end of the third quarter.
 - b. Maximum: each player must sit out 4 minutes (1 sub-quarter). This must be met by the third quarter.
 - c. For all age groups, in the first three quarters, any player on the bench to start a quarter must enter the game at the sub-quarter break.
 - d. All players must enter the game at some point in the fourth quarter
 - e. Any players in violation must immediately be subject to the appropriate corrective action, either removed from the game (for too much playing time) or entered into the game (for not enough playing time). If a team is still in violation of the playing time rule will forfeit the game.
3. Any team found in repeated violation of playing time rules may be subject to further disciplinary action.

4. **Defensive Modifications**

Pee Wee (7-8) Leagues:

- Man-to-man defense throughout the game.
 - No double teaming is allowed.
 - No zones
- Stealing the basketball from a player with possession is not allowed.
 - Penalty: Offended team gets possession of the ball out of bounds.
- Intercepting a pass is allowed.
- Defense in the backcourt is prohibited. Penalty: offended team gets possession of ball out of bounds.

Note: During rebounds players tend to all go towards the ball. Officials will allow brief double teams during rebounds.

Clarification of rules:

- Defensive player must stay within "contact" of the person they are guarding. Contact is defined as 6 feet.
- Offense cannot spread the court hiding players in corners or dead areas with the intent of letting another player or play one-on-one.
- Offensive players not playing offense do not have to be guarded by the defense.

Note to coaches: Please do not try to take advantage of these rules. We are trying to teach the kids how to play solid man to man defense while giving the offense a chance to score in a normal shooting range. Finding ways around this rule is not helping all your kids learn and is not in the spirit of the league.

Mite (9-10) Leagues:

- Man-to-man defense throughout the game.
 - No double-teaming is allowed.
 - No zones
- Defense in the backcourt is prohibited. Penalty: offended team gets possession of ball out of bounds.
- The clock does not start until the ball crosses half court with less than 10 seconds in the fourth quarter when a team is ahead by 2 points or less.

Note: During rebounds players tend to all go towards the ball. Officials will allow brief double-teams during rebounds.

Clarification of rules:

- Defensive player must stay within "contact" of the person they are guarding. Contact is defined as 6 feet.
- Offense cannot spread the court hiding players in corners or dead areas with the intent of letting another player or play one-on-one.
- Offensive players not playing offense do not have to be guarded by the defense.

Note to coaches: Please do not try to take advantage of these rules. We are trying to teach the kids how to play solid man to man defense while giving the offense a chance to score in a normal shooting range. Finding ways around this rule is not helping all your kids learn and is not in the spirit of the league.

All Others Leagues

- Man-to-man or zone defenses allowed.
 - Defense in the backcourt is allowed.
 - Exception: anytime a team is ahead by 20 or more points, they are not to play defense in the backcourt (1st offense- warning, 2nd offense - technical foul).
5. Team rosters with uniform numbers and starting five indicated must be received by the scorer's table five (5) minutes prior to scheduled game time.
 6. **Game time is forfeit time (no exceptions).** A forfeit shall be awarded for failure to field four (4) players at game time. Double forfeits result in each team getting a loss. The gym supervisor's watch is official starting time for each game.
 7. **Time-outs:** four (4) per game, 30 seconds long (one (1) additional time-out for overtime).
 8. Jump ball begins game; alternating possessions thereafter; jump ball begins overtime period.
 9. All technical fouls result in a two-shot penalty and possessions of the ball at the midcourt line.
 10. Two free throws are awarded for a common foul beginning with the team's fifth foul in each quarter, and team fouls reset at the end of each quarter. Team fouls are not kept in the Pee Wee division.
 11. Bench Conduct: Coaches may leave their seat but are expected to stay within their bench area. Players must remain on the bench. Berating of officials will result in a technical foul on the coach. Coaches should go through the gym supervisor for rule interpretation.
 12. Clock kept by scorer's table will serve as official.
 13. **No jewelry** allowed. Officials may also ask a player with glasses to wear a protective strap while they are playing. Players with earrings will have to either take the earrings out or wear tape over them to be able to play.
 14. Recreation Department's scorebook is official unless proven different.
 15. **Unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated.** Violation will minimally result in ejection from game. Any time a player, coach or spectator is ejected by an official or APR&CR staff member, they must leave the playing site immediately. That person shall be automatically suspended for a minimum of the next game the team plays in. More games can be added to

the suspension at the determination of the Department. A suspended coach or parent a may not be present at the playing site for the game(s) in which they are suspended. Failure to abide by this will result in further disciplinary action. A suspended player may be allowed to attend the game to support their teammates, at the discretion of the Department. Game suspensions may apply to regular season games, tournament play, and may, at the discretion of the Department, be carried over to the next season the player or coach registers for.

16.No dunking allowed

- Dunking is not allowed before, during, or after a game.
 - 1st Dunk – Individual Technical Foul and player ejected from the game.
 - 2nd Dunk – Entire team forfeits game (counts as a loss)
 - The 2nd ejection of a player during the season may result in expulsion from the league. This determination will be made by the Program Supervisor.
- Equipment damage resulting from dunking of the ball will be paid for by the party responsible

Player Draft:

To be organized and operated by APR&CR and the league coaches under the following guidelines:

- Teams shall draft in reverse order of their finish in the previous season.
- New teams added to the league and teams with no returning players shall be placed at the top of the draft order. These teams will be ranked based on number and age of option players
 - Teams with the fewest option players will draft first.
 - Coin flip will determine draft order of new teams with same number of option players.
- All teams will be age balanced (as close as possible, dependent on the make-up of the league).
- Each team shall be permitted to keep returning players and “option players” under the following conditions:
 - Options may be awarded to a coach and /or coach’s child who has registered to participate. All options must be declared in writing prior to the draft. All options on the oldest age for the league will be protected through the second round. All options

on the next oldest age will be protected through the third round. Brother / sister options will be protected in the last round. A team is allowed two option players.

- Note: A team may not have more than two option players on its roster during a season. Any player designated an option player the previous year who returns to the same team will remain an option player.
- Based on the total number of players needed to equalize the number on each team, each coach will draft until he reaches this number and then withdraw from the draft.
 - Exception: When a team reaches 6 players on their roster, that team must hold until all other teams reach 6 players. Note: Any team that returns 6 or more players will receive a first-round choice, and then have to hold until all other teams have the same number of players.
- If any teams are short players after the draft, players will be assigned to the team at the discretion of APR&CR. Appointments shall be made per draft order and waiting list policy.
- If a player drops from a team prior to games beginning, APR&CR will attempt to replace that player from the established waiting list.

Uniforms

APR&CR will issue each player of each team a uniform. The uniform will consist of a game jersey. Each player must wear this jersey, unaltered, to each game. A player not in uniform or an altered uniform will be declared ineligible. Shirts must be tucked in during play.

- Altered uniform definition is when a player defaces the shirt in any way.
- Examples: Cutting sleeves or adding name to game jersey, are some examples but do not represent every situation. Coaches are responsible to make sure that every player is wearing an official uniform that will satisfy this rule.
- If the officials deem the jerseys too close in color, the visiting team will wear pennies that will be provided by APR&CR.

Additional Notes for Coaches:

1. The department shall furnish the game ball, a gym supervisor, a scorer, a timer, game officials, and game jerseys.
2. A meeting, before your first practice with your players and parents is strongly recommended.

3. Coaches are responsible for the conduct of players before, during and after all practices and games.
4. Players are expected to attend all department scheduled practices and games. Violation may result in reduced playing time. Any disciplinary situation which may result in reduced playing time for a child must be reported to the recreation department or facility supervisor **prior** to taking the action. All practices not scheduled by APR&CR are to be cleared in advance by APR&CR. Practices not scheduled by APR&CR cannot be made mandatory for purposes of playing time (a player cannot be benched for missing an unofficial practice).
5. Phone trees, group texts, and email lists are recommended for team contact.
6. The referee shall not permit any player to wear equipment that is dangerous or confusing to other players. This includes, but not limited to, items such as:
 - a. A guard, cast or brace made of hard and unyielding leather, plaster, pliable (soft) plastic, metal or any other hard substance - even if covered with soft padding - when worn on the elbow, hand, finger, wrist or forearm.
 - b. Head decorations, head wear and jewelry: Exception: Head bands no wider than 2 inches and made of nonabrasive unadorned single-colored cloth, fiber, soft leather or rubber may be worn. Rubber (elastic) bands may be used to control hair. Accommodations will also be made for headwear that is religious in nature.
 - c. Equipment which is unnatural and designed to increase a player's height or reach or to gain an advantage.