

# BASKETBALL GENERAL RULES

Federation Internationale de Basketball Amateur (FIBA) rules shall be employed in international competitions and the National Federation of State High School Association rules for basketball (NFHS) rules shall be employed in USA competition except when either is in conflict with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules. For more information, visit [www.fiba.com](http://www.fiba.com).

## **OFFICIAL EVENTS OFFERED:**

1. Team Basketball (coed)
2. Unified Sports® Team Basketball (coed) – Invitational only

## **SECTION A – GENERAL RULES**

Teams must play a minimum of two documented games against other Special Olympics teams prior to registration for district competition (unified teams must play unified teams). The team roster must remain the same for the two qualifying games, district, sectional and State competition. Teams that modify their rosters will forfeit all games. Qualifying games must be played against other teams with an Intent to Play Form on file. One game must be played against a team from another Agency. Forfeited games do not count toward the scrimmage requirement. **It is strongly recommended that teams play other teams that are in their competition district.**

### 1. Team Competition

#### a. Divisioning

- 1) Prior to all Regional, district, sectional and State competitions, teams will be divisioned according to coaches' input and scores of at least two games played versus other Special Olympics teams. (**NOTE:** Agencies are encouraged to scrimmage teams within their district/Region. This will help the divisioning process).

**NOTE:** Two games played before Regional/district competition registration deadline is **mandatory!**

- 2) The team roster (composition) must remain the same for qualifying games and tournament play. Players may not change teams.

a) Qualifying Games—A player must be present for one of the two qualifying games. If a player is absent from a qualifying game this must be noted on the qualifying games information turned into the district/Regional host prior to competition.

b) Tournament Play—If a player is absent at any level of competition they may not advance with the team to the next level of competition. All players present at a competition must be on the bench and listed on the scorecard. They must have the opportunity to play in one game. If a player is unable to play due to injury, the coach must tell the scorer so they can record the injury on the scorecard. Based on the severity of the injury, the player may be allowed to leave with the approval of the Tournament Director. If a player is unable to play due to illness, the coach must tell the scorer so they can record the illness on the scorecard and must be present (on the bench if possible) at the tournament in order to advance to the next level of competition.

#### b. Modifications

- 1) A game will consist of four periods, each six minutes long (clock will be stopped in accordance to WIAA Rules).

- 2) A player may take two steps beyond what is allowable; however, if the player scores, or escapes the defense as a result of these extra steps, an advantage has been gained. A violation is called immediately.
- 3) While a game is in progress, coaches are to remain in their team's bench area. In accordance with WIAA rules, ONLY the head coach may stand in front of the team bench during play; all other bench personnel must remain seated except during a time out or intermission between quarters or halves. If any coach is penalized with a technical foul, the head coach must remain seated for the duration of the contest. Each team shall be allowed a maximum of three coaches on their bench during games. Only coaches that are listed on the team's registration form are allowed to sit in the bench area. Only athletes with valid medicals are allowed. Athletes not listed on the roster may not sit on the bench unless they are an official athlete-as-coach. \*See ALPs section Athletes-as-Coaches Program of the Agency Manager's Handbook.
- 4) The three-second rule restriction is in force when team control exists in the opponent's front court. (**NOTE:** in FIBA rules, a team shoots at its opponent's basket, thus the opponent's front court.)
- 5) The free throw shooter shall release the ball within 10 seconds from the time it is placed at the shooter's disposal by one of the officials.
- 6) Two (2) free throws will be awarded beginning with the seventh team foul in each half.
- 7) If overtime is required due to a tie at the end of regulation play, play shall continue without change of baskets. A one minute intermission will follow regulation play and each overtime period. The amount of time for an overtime period is three minutes. Each overtime period will begin with a jump ball.

c. Equipment

- 1) Special Olympics Basketball requires the use of NFHS standard basketball equipment including the regulation men's basketball, baskets and basket heights.  
  
The playing court shall be limited by the boundary line, consisting of the end-lines and the sidelines. These lines are not part of the playing court. Any obstruction including seated team bench personnel shall be a minimum of three feet from the playing court. Obstruction also includes miscellaneous seating for spectators or other personnel.
- 2) Uniform/Apparel  
All players must wear basketball attire with identifying numbers and flat rubber sole athletic shoes.
  - a) Team uniform shirts and shorts must be identical in trim color and style.
  - b) Undershirts, if worn, must be white, black, or match the color of the body of the uniform (not the trim). Undershirts may be worn by some or all of the players, but must be identical if worn. They may be short sleeve, tank top (no cut or ragged edges are allowed), or long sleeve (but they must be the same length).

**NOTE:** Players with illegal uniforms will not be allowed to play. Players with non-matching uniforms will be penalized accordingly. Legality of a uniform may be determined by the Games Management Team or by the event coordinator.

- c) If a player wears an undergarment that extends below the bottom of the uniform short, (i.e. compression shorts), the undergarment must be the same color as the main color of the uniform shorts and end above the knee.

- d) Players on a team must wear matching uniform shorts (identical color, trim and style – nylon, mesh, etc). The only exception is in the case of medical or religious reasons. In these cases, the uniform pants or tights must be the same color and trim as the team uniform short. A Special Needs Form must be sent with the team's Registration Form by the tournament registration deadline noting the exception.
- e) The shirt numbers shall be at least six inches high on the back and at least four inches high on the front and not less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch in width. (Taped numbers or pinnies are not legal in SOWI competition unless pinnies are provided by tournament hosts due to similarly colored jerseys on two teams.) Numbers are required on the back and front of the uniform.
- f) The following numbers are legal: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 00, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55. A team roster shall not have both numbers 0 and 00.
- g) Head Coverings – Headgear Covering: Head covering are permitted but should adhere to the following rules;
  - i. It shall not cover any part of the face entirely or partially
  - ii. It shall not be dangerous to the player wearing it
  - iii. It shall not have opening/closing element around the face and/or neck and shall not have any parts extruding from its surface.
  - iv. It shall meet the same safety standards as for a medical head covering. Head covering must be of a single, solid color unadorned.
- h) Proper uniforms and uniform numbering will be enforced! Individuals who do not adhere to uniform regulations will not be allowed to enter a game.
- i) Special situations: an accommodation may be made in exceptional situations such as an athlete with a behavior problem or requiring a 4XL size. Teams wishing to apply for an exception must contact the host tournament coordinator and receive approval in advance of the registration deadline. An athlete may be allowed to wear a uniform that is not identical; however they must wear one of similar color. Exceptions requested on site will not be granted.

**NOTE:** Failure to comply with team uniform rules will cause the team to forfeit its game if the player with the uniform violation takes the team below the legal number of players to start the game. A team may use the time between games to rectify a uniform violation. If they do not, and the player(s) with the violation takes the team below the legal number of players to start the second game, that game will also be a forfeit.

- 3) Athletes may not wear or use equipment which may be dangerous or confusing to other players. Examples of illegal items include but are not limited to: wheelchairs, crutches, or other items considered illegal by the NFHS including jewelry.
- d. Officials and their Duties
  - 1) Officials conduct the game in accordance with the rules.  
**NOTE:** Violations will be called (including double dribble).
  - 2) Officials shall have full authority to interpret rules. For further questions, the tournament rules committee shall be consulted.

- 3) Officials shall have the power to make all decisions on any points not specifically covered in the rules.
  - 4) Two free throws will be awarded at the seventh foul of each half.
  - 5) The game will consist of four periods each six minutes long.
  - 6) A team will be entitled to three timeout periods of 60 seconds each and two 30-second timeout periods during the game. Each team is entitled to one additional timeout during each extra period.
  - 7) Halftime will be a minimum of five minutes and a maximum of 10 minutes with one minute breaks between quarters at the discretion of Games Management Team and/or officials.
  - 8) Each team will be allowed 10 minutes after the scheduled game time to take the court. If a team is not ready to take the court at the end of 10 minutes, the game will be forfeited.
- e. **Players and Substitutes**
- 1) Each team roster shall consist of a minimum number of five players with a maximum of 12 players. A team must have five players to start a game. Failure to start with five players will result in a forfeiture of the game(s). Teams must be ready to field a legal team within ten minutes of the declared start of the game or the game will be forfeited.
  - 2) During play, due to injury or player disqualification, a team may play with as few as three players. However, if a team is unable to field at least three players, the game shall be forfeit. At no time can play continue with less than the minimum number of players.
  - 3) Substitutions may be made any time the ball is dead and the clock is stopped. Substitutes must report to the scorer who will notify the referee of substitutions.
  - 4) An athlete may participate on only one SOWI team in a basketball season. If the athlete plays on a second team for whatever reason, those games will not count toward qualifying games.
  - 5) All players will be asked to participate in the game. If a player refuses or is unable to participate, the coach must notify the scorer's table and the other coach.
- f. **Scoring**
- 1) Scoring will follow NFHS rules.
  - 2) If the score is tied at the end of the second half, play shall continue without change of baskets for extra periods of three minutes until the score is no longer tied.
  - 3) Scorebook procedures (see example in this section.)

## 2. Unified Sports® Team Basketball

- a. The roster shall contain a proportionate number of athletes and partners according to the Unified Rules Section of the Competition Guide.
- b. During competition, the line up shall never exceed three athletes and two partners at any time. If at any time this ratio is not adhered to, the offending team will automatically forfeit the game.

- c. Each team will have an adult non-playing coach responsible for the line-up and the conduct of the team during competition.
3. Half-Court Basketball: 3-on-3 Competition
- a. Divisioning
    - 1) The Head Coach must submit the scores from both of the Basketball Skills Assessment Tests (BSAT), e.g., dribbling and perimeter shooting, for each player on his/her roster prior to competition.
    - 2) The Head Coach must also identify his/her three best players in terms of their on-court playing ability by placing a star next to their names on the roster.
    - 3) The team score shall be determined by adding the top four players' scores and then dividing that total by four.
    - 4) Teams are initially grouped in divisions according to their BSAT team score.
  - b. Playing Area and Equipment
    - 1) Any half-court section of a basketball court may be used. The court will be bounded by the end line under the basket, two sidelines and the half-court line.
    - 2) Each team must wear a uniform shirt. Team shirts shall be of the same solid color, front and back. Each player shall be numbered on the front and back of the shirt with plain Arabic numbers of at least 20 centimeters (6-8 inches) high on the back and 10 centimeters (4 inches) high on the front and not less than 2 centimeters (3/4 inch) in width. All numbers are to be per NGB specifications.
  - c. Team and Players
    - 1) A team may have up to five players, which includes three starters and two substitutes.  
**Unified:** During 3-on-3 competition, there must always be two athletes and one partner in the lineup. Failure to adhere to the required ratio results in a forfeit. A team may drop below a minimum of two athletes due to injury but must have at least one athlete on the court to complete the game. If no athletes remain due to disqualification or injury the team will have to forfeit the game.  
**Traditional:** Each team must start the game with three players. Any make up of players is allowed.
    - 2) Half-court basketball is a game of three-on-three. Each team must start the game with three players. A team may drop below 3 after the start of the game due to player injury or illness but must have 3 players to start the game. A team may not drop below a minimum of 2 athletes or will have to forfeit the game. For Unified 3-on-3, the ratio will be 1 athlete and 1 partner.
  - d. The Game
    - 1) The game will be played for 10 minutes or until one team scores 21 points. A made field goal counts as one point unless attempted from behind the arc, then it counts as two points. A made free throw counts as one point.
    - 2) There will be a running clock applied until the final minute of regulation play. There will be a stop clock applied. The clock will stop for all dead ball situations (e.g., fouls, violations, field goals, and timeouts).

- 3) The game will start with a flip of a coin for possession. There is no jump ball. All jump balls will be administered by alternate possession, starting with the team that wins the flip of the coin.
- 4) The winning team is the team with the highest score after the 20-minute game or the team to achieve a lead of 15 points or greater.
- 5) If overtime is required due to a tie at the end of regulation play, the team that did not start the game with ball possession, will start the overtime. The first team to score two points will win the game.

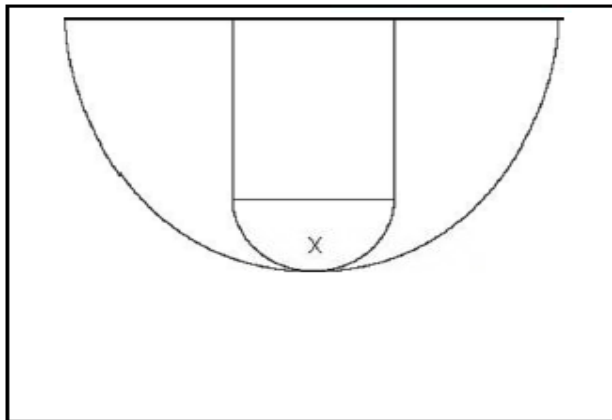
e. Competition

- 1) The referee will handle the ball after all dead ball situations.
- 2) The ball is dead after a foul or violation is called, a field goal is made or any other time the referee blows his/her whistle.
- 3) Teams change possession of the ball after made field goals. However, if a player is fouled in the act of shooting and makes the basket, the field goal is credited, and the offended against team retains possession of the ball.
- 4) The in-bound spot in all cases (fouls, violations, out-of-bounds, made field goals, timeouts) will be behind the foul line extended at a designated spot within the restraining circle at the top of the key marked with an "X." This procedure is used for all fouls, violations, time-outs, out-of-bounds and made field goals. The in-bounder will be at the designated spot; all other players are within the half-court boundaries. The in-bound pass may be made to a player either in front of or behind the in-bounder. After the ball is put into play by passing to a teammate, any offensive player can shoot. The OFFENSE can have players move behind the person in-bounding the ball from the "X" to receive the inbounds pass... but the DEFENSE is also permitted to have players continue to play defense on any offensive player that moves in those directions.
- 5) On any change of possession, the team which just gained possession of the ball must take the ball back behind the foul line extended before shooting. In taking the ball back, either the ball or the foot of the player in possession must touch the foul line extended or the area behind it.
- 6) A violation has occurred when the defense who has just gained possession of the ball attempts a field goal without taking it back behind the foul line extended. If a shot is attempted by the defense after a gained possession without taking it back to the foul line extended, the possession returns to the offense as a dead ball and will need to be in-bounded from the "X".
- 7) Substitutions may be made on a dead ball. When one team makes a substitution, the other team must be given an opportunity to substitute as well. Players entering the game must report to the scorer's table and be beckoned into the game by the referee.
- 8) Two 60-second timeouts are allowed per team. When a timeout is called, the clock will be stopped. A player injury timeout may be called by the referee. The referee may stop the clock at his/her discretion and is advised to do so at any time. For example, allowing the clock to run when the ball bounces well out of play gives one team an unfair advantage. Consequently, the clock should be stopped.

- 9) A held ball is called when opposing players have one or both hands so firmly on the ball that possession can be gained only by force. The ball is awarded on the basis of alternate possession.
- 10) On those courts where the basket support is on the playing court, a player whose body touches the support is not considered out-of-bounds unless he/she has control of the ball. If the ball touches the support, it is considered out-of-bounds. No player may use the support to gain advantage or put an opposing player at a disadvantage
- 11) Officials will grant a player or a coach's oral or hand signal request for a timeout.

f. Fouls and Penalties

- 1) A foul is an infraction of the rules involving personal contact with an opponent or unsportsmanlike behavior. It is charged against the offender.
- 2) On all fouls (personal, common, technical), the offended against team will get possession of the ball at the designated spot behind the foul line extended and within the restraining circle at the top of the key. If a player is fouled in the act of shooting and makes the basket, the field goal is credited. The offended against team also retains possession of the ball. In all cases, no free throws will be awarded or attempted. (See diagram below).



- 3) There are no individual or team foul limits. The referee can decide to give a player an Unsportsmanlike foul if the player does not adapt his/her game after making several fouls and a warning of the referee. (Two unsportsmanlike fouls is disqualification of the game).

Team fouls are limited to 6 per team. There is a penalty of 2 free throws for team foul 7, 8 & 9. The penalty for team foul 10 and more are 2 free throws and ball possession. This clause is applied also to fouls during the act of shooting and overrules

- 4) An offensive player, including the shooter, may remain in the free throw lane for only three seconds. The penalty for this infraction is loss of possession. A Technical Foul shall be awarded with one free throw and ball possession. An Unsportsmanlike Foul shall be awarded with two free throws and ball possession.
- 5) A player making a throw-in shall have five seconds to release the ball. The penalty for taking more than five seconds shall be loss of possession.

g. Points of emphasis

- 1) It is a violation for player to "double dribble."

- 2) Concerning optional adaptations:  
A player may take two steps beyond what is allowable. However, if the player scores, "travels," or escapes the defense as a result
4. Unified Sports Team Competition (including 3-on-3 & 5 player full court)
    - a. The roster shall contain a proportionate number of athletes and partners.
    - b. Team and Players
      - 1) Half-court basketball is a game of three-on-three. Each team must start the game with three players. A team may drop below 3 after the start of the game due to player injury or illness but must have 3 to start the game. For Unified 3v3, the ratio will be 1 athlete and 1 partner. A team may not drop below a minimum of 2 athletes or will have to forfeit the game.
      - 2) 5-player full court: five players are required to start a game. There can never be more than 3 athletes and 2 partners on the court at any time and there can never be more partners in the lineup than athletes at any time.
      - 3) Failure to adhere to the required ratio results in a forfeit.
    - d. Each team shall have an adult non-playing coach responsible for the lineup and conduct of the team during competition.