

Basic Rules for Upward Play

*Note: These rules do not apply to Level 4 (5th-7th Grade). Except where the following rules apply, play is governed by the National Federation of State High School Associations' (NFHS) Rules Book (www.nfhs.org)

Game Format

1. Referees lead both teams in prayer at center court before every game. This sets the tone and focus for the game.
2. Each period will begin with alternating possessions: 1st-Guest, 2nd-Home, etc. this promotes fairness for both teams. This has absolutely nothing to do with jump ball possessions.
3. In jump ball situations, possessions will alternate, beginning with Home Team possession first.
4. Clock format: Running clock throughout the game, stopping only for pre-determined substitutions at the end of each period and halftime.
5. All coaches will adhere to the substitution system as detailed in the coaches guide. The substitution system allows for equal playing time for all players.
6. There are not timeouts. This allows for 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 time. Zone defenses are not allowed in Upward Basketball. 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.
3. Isolation plays will not be a part of Upward Basketball, because they take away the opportunity for improvement for all players and contradict the spirit of the rules. This prevents defenders from sagging or crowding an area of the court to gain a defensive advantage.
4. 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.

5. At the beginning of each period, 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.
6. 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.
7. Due to the shortness of the court, backcourt violations will not be called. If playing on a regulation size court (84’), as opposed to cross-court, backcourt violations should be called.
8. A player committing two fouls in one period must sit out the remainder of that period. 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 period, 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. Non-shooting fouls will result in the ball being in-bounded from either the baseline or sideline. All shooting fouls will result in free throws. By not administering “bonus” situation free throws, all players on the court can contribute to consistent game action.
3. 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.
4. All other rules have specific modifications for each level.