



## Spirit League Basketball Guidelines

Spirit League follows the general guidelines listed below for basketball. The Guidelines vary by age division.

### Division 1 (13 to 20+ years)

- 1) The health and safety of the athletes is the most important consideration of this League. Coaches shall ensure that the games are conducted in a safe manner.
- 2) Athletes shall not wear any jewelry (e.g., rings, ear rings) during practices or games.
- 3) Total court time is 90 minutes and should be used as follows:
  - 5-10 minute Stretching
  - 25 minutes of practice with water breaks given as needed.
  - 5 minute prep time for game
  - 10 minute quarter
  - 3 minute water break
  - 10 minute quarter
  - 5 minute water break
  - 10 minute quarter
  - 3 minute water break
  - 10 minute quarter
  - \*End of game – High fives

Early arrival and warm-up by a team allows for more practice time.

- 4) Games will be played on the two cross-courts. Second sessions (Divisions 1 and 2) may play a larger full court game.
- 5) Coaching will be done from the sidelines - only referees are allowed on the court. Each coach can use the sideline in front of his team's bench up to midcourt.
- 6) The game duration will be 40 minutes played in 4, 10 minute quarters. The clock will run continuously during the game unless an injury or special circumstance arises deemed by the referee or Athletic Director.
- 7) There will be no time stoppages for fouls. No free throws. The ball will be awarded as a throw in from either the baseline or sideline. Referees will be the only ones to call fouls.
- 8) If an athlete is injured, the health and safety of the athlete is the most important consideration. The injury permitting, a substitution should be made immediately, and the injured athlete attended to on the sideline by the coach and Athletic

Director.

- 9) It is the intent of the League to call fouls and violations in accordance with basketball rules. It is recognized, however, that there will be a wide range in athletic ability and skill levels. With the agreement of both coaches, the referee can overlook minor infractions (e.g., shuffling feet) for specific athletes to maintain the game flow. Conversely, it is asked that the coaches work diligently in the first few weeks to teach the game concepts so that the game can be called without exceptions by mid-season.
- 10) A jump ball at mid-court will start the game. Possession will remain with the team that had possession at the end of each quarter, not including the half. At halftime, the team that did not win the initial tip-off will start possession of the 3rd quarter.
- 11) Possession of the ball for throw-ins resulting from contested (i.e., jump balls), and beginning play will alternate for each team.
- 12) The second and fourth quarters will begin with a throw-in from the baseline of the team with possession.
- 13) Full-court pressure defense will not be allowed. On a change of possession, the defensive team must cross midcourt and allow the offensive team to bring in the ball.\*\*\*
- 14) The offensive team must complete a minimum of two in-bound touches by different athletes before shooting the ball. The primary intent of this rule is to foster team play and prevent a single skilled athlete from dominating a game. Coaches should work diligently to ensure that all athletes touch the ball and have an opportunity to shoot a basket.
- 15) Every athlete will play each quarter of the game unless injured or unwilling to play, minus the implementing of substitutes.
- 16) Coaches should minimize the number of substitutions, and should try to use the mandatory mid-quarter timeouts as the preferred substitution times. All substitutions must be made during a dead-ball and with acknowledgement of the referee.
- 17) Coaches are responsible for keeping time. Prior to beginning the game, the opposing coaches will agree on the official time keeper. The time keeper will also be responsible  
. for tracking alternating possessions for the purposes of jump balls. Possible solutions are parents or volunteers.
- 18) Dominating Team/Athlete. While every attempt has been made to make the teams as balanced as possible, conditions may arise where one team is dominating another. Lopsided scores are counter to the purpose and goals of Spirit League. At the same time, the League does not want to discourage athletes from participating because they are too talented. This will require coordination between the coaches, as well as each coach employing strategies to expand the role of talented athletes beyond scoring all of the team's points.
- 19) The coaches should work together to avoid scores separated by more than 15 points. Basketball scoring, flow and leads can change constantly. However, if one team builds a lead of more than 15 points the coaches should identify an approach

that will return parity without penalizing the successful athlete. One suggestion is to direct the skilled athlete towards assists and rebounding, or that his shots can only be off of a defensive rebound. Remember, coaches should teach that every skill in basketball is important, not just scoring.

## Division 2 (9 to 13 years)

Due to the large differences in the athletic and skill levels exhibited by the athletes in this League, modifications are made to the basic rules in order to facilitate team play, encourage participation, increase parity and prevent domination by a single skilled athlete, and to aid teaching skills, game concepts and sportsmanship. The specific rules modifications for Spirit League are:

1. The health and safety of the athletes is the most important consideration of the League. Coaches shall ensure that the games are conducted in a safe manner.
2. Athletes shall not wear any jewelry (e.g., rings, ear rings) during practices or games.
3. Total court time is 90 minutes and will be used as follows:
  - a. 5-10 minute Stretching
  - b. 20-25 minutes of practice with water breaks given as needed.
  - c. 5 minute prep time for game
  - d. 10 minute quarter
  - e. 3 minute water break
  - f. 10 minute quarter
  - g. 5 minute water break
  - h. 10 minute quarter
  - i. 3 minute water break
  - j. 10 minute quarter
  - k. \*End of game – High fives

Early arrival and warm-up by a team allows for more practice time.

4. Games will be played on the two cross-courts. The second session in Divisions 1 and 2 may play a larger full court game.
5. Coaching will be done from the court if necessary - only one coach from each team (acting as referees) is allowed on the court. Asst. coaches can use the sideline in front of his team's bench up to midcourt. I recommend the assist coach monitors and prepares substitutes throughout the game. We do not want the court getting too crowded with adults and too much direction being given that may confuse athletes.
6. The game duration will be 40 minutes played in 4, 10 minute quarters. A timeout will be called at the midpoint of each quarter for a water break and substitutions. Otherwise, the clock will run continuously throughout each quarter with the exception of injuries and situations deemed by the referee or Athletic Director.
7. There will be no time stoppages for fouls.
8. If an athlete is injured, the health and safety of the athlete is the most important consideration. The injury permitting, a substitution should be made immediately, and the injured athlete attended to on the sideline.
9. It is the intent of the League to call fouls and violations in accordance with basketball rules. It is recognized, however, that there will be a wide range in

athletic ability and skill levels. With the agreement of both coaches, the referee can overlook minor infractions (e.g., shuffling feet) for specific athletes to maintain the game flow. Conversely, it is asked that the coaches work diligently in the first few weeks to teach the game concepts so that the game can be called without exceptions by mid-season.

10. A throw-in from the opposing basket will start the game and the second half. Home team will start the game and the Visiting team will start the second half. The weekly schedule will reflect the Home team and Visiting team.
11. Possession of the ball for throw-ins resulting from contested (i.e., jump balls), and beginning play will alternate.
12. The beginning of each quarter will begin with a throw-in from the baseline of the team with possession.
13. Full-court pressure defense will not be allowed. On a change of possession, the defensive team must cross midcourt and allow the offensive team to bring in the ball.
14. The offensive team must complete a minimum of two touches by different athletes before shooting the ball. The primary intent of this rule is to foster team play and prevent a single skilled athlete from dominating a game. Coaches should work diligently to ensure that all athletes touch the ball and have an opportunity to shoot a basket.
15. Every athlete will play each quarter of the game unless injured or unwilling to play with the exception of substitutions when applicable.
16. Coaches should minimize the number of substitutions, and should try to use the mandatory mid-quarter timeouts as the preferred substitution times. All substitutions must be made during a dead-ball and with acknowledgement of the coaches (referees).
17. Coaches are responsible for scoring and keeping time. Prior to beginning the game, the opposing coaches will agree on the official timer. The timer will also be responsible for tracking alternating possessions for the purposes of jump or held balls. Possible solutions are parent or volunteers.
18. Dominating Team/Athlete. While every attempt has been made to make the teams as balanced as possible conditions may arise where one team is dominating another. Lopsided scores are counter to the purpose and goals of Spirit League. At the same time, the League does not want to discourage athletes from participating because they are too talented. This will require coordination between the coaches, as well as each coach employing strategies to expand the role of talented athletes beyond scoring all of the team's points.
19. The coaches should work together to avoid scores separated by more than 15 points. Basketball scores ebb and flow, and leads can change constantly. However, if one team builds a lead of more than 15 points the coaches should identify an

approach that will return parity without penalizing the successful athlete. One suggestion is to direct the skilled athlete towards assists and rebounding, or that his shots can only be off of a defensive rebound. Coaches should reiterate throughout the season that every part of basketball is important, not just scoring.

### **Division 3 (6 to 9 years)**

- 1) Game is played on a half court.
- 2) Coaches will be on court to coach and referee the game.
- 3) Fouls and violations will be called by coaches and a brief explanation of why the foul was called should be clarified to the athlete.
- 4) Game will consist of 4, 10 minute quarters. After 5 minutes there will be a break for water and substitutions.
- 5) The visiting team will start with possession and then alternate between teams with the start to each quarter.
- 6) There is no full court press -defense must retreat to mid court to allow the offense to bring the ball into play. Zone defense should be the primary skill taught to athletes.
- 7) The ball must be passed at least 2 times to different athletes before a basket can be made.
- 8) Out of bounds ball will be thrown in from area where it went out of bounds.
- 9) Substitutions will be made by the discretion of the coaches and athletic director.
- 10) No Scoring. Keep the game fun and positive.
- 11) At this level, violations are going to be inevitable. Coaches should do their best to guide athletes into performing with proper fundamentals such as dribbling with one hand, not traveling or walking with the ball, and keeping their hands straight up in the air when contesting shots.

Game days will consist of 90 minutes of practice and playing a game, listed below is a suggested time schedule:

30 minutes of practice -water breaks as needed  
5 minute break for preparations for the game  
10 minute first quarter  
3 minute water break  
10 minute second quarter  
5 minute half time water break  
10 minute third quarter  
3 minute water break  
10 minute fourth quarter