

USA BASKETBALL 2026 U.S. OPEN BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS - TOURNAMENT RULES

Please note, where a specific rule is not listed, it is recommended to refer to the official 2025-26 NFHS Basketball Rules.

Competition Regulation

Game Ball

Girls - Size 6 28.5" Nike Elite Basketball
Boys - Size 7 29.5" Nike Elite Basketball

All competition basketball will be provided by USA Basketball. The ball shall include the USA Basketball Youth Development Mark.

Grace Period

10-minute grace period (must have a minimum of (1) coach and (5) players after the official game start time.

Bench Reminder

Only verified players and licensed coaches are allowed on the bench. All coaches and bench personnel must always wear their tournament credentials.

Game Forfeit

A team shall lose by forfeit, if;

1. The team is not present or is unable to field a minimum of five (5) players after the grace period elapses.
2. Refusal to play or not ready to compete after being instructed to do so by officials.
3. Actions prevent or delay the game from being played.

Penalty, if forfeiture occurs:

1. The game is awarded to the opponent;
 - a. The opponent must be present to be awarded the victory.
 - b. The score will be recorded as 15-0.
2. Tournament Director(s) will assess further action depending on the nature of the forfeit; Multiple or disciplinary forfeitures risk the team being disqualified from the tournament.

Default forfeiture:

If there are fewer than two (2) players able to play prior to or at any point during competition, the team will forfeit the match by default.

1. If the team to which the game is awarded to is ahead, the score will stand as recorded, at the time of forfeiture.
2. If the team to which the game is forfeited is ahead, the score will be recorded as 5-0 to the non-forfeited team.

Timing Regulation

Pre-game Warm-Up

10-minutes prior to game start, unless shortened due to time restraints; **minimum of 4-minutes** will be allowed.

Game Duration

Game Length = 32 Minutes
Quarter Length = 8 Minutes
Quarter Intermission = 1 Minute
Halftime Intermission = 5 Minutes

Clock Stoppage

1. **On any dead ball.**
2. **Last two (2) minutes of the fourth (4th) quarter and any overtime period(s), upon a made basket.**

Overtime

Overtime 1 & 2 Length = 3 Minutes
Overtime 3 or more = 1 Minute
Overtime Intermission(s) = 1 Minute

Shot Clock

Length = 30 Seconds
Reset = 30 Seconds

Shot Clock (Starts)

1. A player touches or is touched by the ball inbounds during a throw-in.
2. A team gains control after a jump ball.

Shot Clock (Resets)

1. Change of possession and control is made.
2. On rebound (after ball has contacted the cylinder).
3. Defensive kicked ball.
4. Foul.

Timeouts

2x Full Length = 60 Seconds
2x Half Length = 30 Seconds

Timeouts may be used at any time during regulation. Timeout DO NOT carry over into any overtime periods.

1x Overtime Time-out = 30 Seconds

Must be used during the first (1st) overtime period. No additional timeouts will be given or can be used in additional overtime periods.

Timing Regulation Continued

8-Second Limit (Free Throws)

Eight (8) seconds time limit after the ball has been placed at the disposal of the free thrower.

Backcourt Timing

10 Seconds

Closely Guarded

5 Seconds

Gameplay

Substitutions

- A substitute who desires to enter the game, shall report to the scores table.
- **Final 2-minutes of the 4th period and any OT;** a non-scoring team is permitted to substitute after any successful field goal. The scoring team is prohibited from substituting unless the non-scoring team initiates a substitution prior.
- **During a free throw;** Substitutions are permitted only before the first free throw attempt or after the final free throw in the series, provided the last throw is successful. Teams are prohibited from substituting between free throw attempts of two or more.

Bonus Free Throws

Two (2) free throws awarded for a common foul beginning with the team's 5th foul in each quarter.

1. **NO 1 and 1 bonus.**
2. Fouls reset at the end of each quarter.

Restricted Area/Charge Circle

On a block-charge play, a defensive player cannot be standing within the "Restricted Area", even if stationary and/or legal guarding position.

Ball Advancement

In the **last two (2) minutes of the fourth (4th) quarter and each overtime period**, following a timeout a team may elect to inbound the basketball from the offensive team's front court (opposite the scorer's table).

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Gameplay Continued

Head Coach Standing Rule

Only the head coach may stand for an extended duration throughout the game; If the head coach is disqualified from the game, an assistant may assume the head coach duties.

Press Defense Rule

No full court press is allowed by a team who is ahead by more than 25 points.

Mercy Rule

If a team is ahead by 30 or more points in the second (2nd) half, the clock will run continuously, except during timeouts and injuries.

1. If the point differential drops below 20 points, the clock will resume to normal stoppage.
2. Losing team may deny the rule entirely.

Misconduct

Technical Fouls

A player, team non-contact foul or behavior-nature during a live or dead ball.

Penalty:

1. Non-penalized team is awarded one (1) free-throw and possession.
 - a. If the non-penalized team was in possession during the point of interruption, play will resume from that point of interruption concluding free throw attempt.
 - b. If the penalized team was in possession during the point of interruption, possession is lost.
2. Any player in-play at time of interruption may take the technical shot.
3. A technical foul against a player is charged as an individual foul and a team foul.
4. A technical foul against bench personnel is charged against the head coach – does not count toward team fouls.
5. Any player who accumulates two (2) technical fouls during a competition match will immediately be disqualified from the remainder of the current game.

Misconduct Continued

Unsportsmanlike Foul

A player contact foul which in the judgment of an official is:

1. Not a legitimate attempt to directly make a play on the ball.
2. Excessive and/or hard contact.
3. Unnecessary contact by a defender to stop the progress of an offensive player or team in transition.
4. Contact by a defensive player from behind an opponent with a clear path to the basket.
5. Charged as an individual and a team foul against the penalized player and team.

Penalty:

1. Two (2) free-throws if the player was not in the act of shooting or was in the act and failed the attempt.
2. One (1) free-throw if the player was in the act of shooting and the attempt was successful.

Disqualification and Ejection

A coach or player who is charged with any combination of two (2) technical fouls and/or unsportsmanlike foul misconducts will be disqualified for the remainder of the game.

1. Any athlete or coach ejected during a game, must leave the building until the game concludes.
2. The ejected individual may not participate or be on the team bench for the next scheduled game.
3. Tournament Director(s) have final say on any code of conduct violations, which could result in coach license suspension.

Competition Conclusion

Official Sign-Off

Concluding all competition games, officials must confirm the correct score and winning team by signing off on the scoresheet.

Game Disputes

Protest forms may only be filled out by the head coach from a team.

1. Protest forms may only be filled out by the head coach from a team.
2. Completed form must be submitted to the tournament director for review and final decision.
3. **Must be accompanied by a \$100 cash protest payment; refunded if protest is upheld.**

Seeding & Format

Group Play Placement & Format

Group placement is done at random. Advancement to bracket is based on group play standing.

4-Team Groups; 3-Game Round Robin

Bracket Seeding & Format

Bracket placement and seedings are determined at conclusion of pool play based on division standings.

Group Rankings Two Team Tie-break

1. Head to Head
2. Point Differential
3. Least Points Allowed
4. Most Points Scored
5. Coin Toss

Group Rankings 3+ Team Tie-Break

1. Point Differential
2. Least Points Allowed
3. Most Points Scored

Note:

The maximum number of points you can win/lose by is 15; In the case of a forfeit, the score will be 15-0.

Division Rankings

1. Group Ranking
2. Group Record
3. Point Differential
4. Least Points Allowed
5. Most Points Scored
6. Coin Toss

Bench Rules

Dress Code

All bench personnel must adhere to the coaches' dress code by wearing a collared top (i.e., quarter zip, polo, etc.) and dress pants/shorts, khakis, golf pants/shorts or dress skirts along with closed-toe shoes.

Prohibited Attire

- **Tops:** T-shirts, distressed or torn tops, cut-off shirts.
- **Bottoms:** Sweatpants, leggings, athletic/exercise shorts, distressed jeans.
- **Footwear:** Slippers, sandals, flip-flops, Crocs, or any open-heeled or open-toed shoes.
- **Headwear:** Hats, caps, durags, hoods, or other non-religious headgear.