CSA BASKETBALL

OFFICIAL LEAGUE RULE BOOK

Cleveland Sports Association | Grades 3-8

These rules are designed to provide a safe, fair, competitive, and enjoyable basketball experience for all CSA players. Some rules vary by division and are noted below.

CHAPTER 1 - GAME FORMAT

1.1 Game Length

- Games consist of **two 20-minute halves**.
- The game is played with a running clock except during designated clock-stoppage situations.
- Halftime will be kept brief to ensure games remain on schedule.

1.2 Timeouts

- Each team receives **2 timeouts per half**.
- Unused timeouts do **not** carry over from one half to the next.
- The clock stops during all timeouts.

1.3 Final Two Minutes

- During the **final 2 minutes of the second half**, the clock will stop for official stoppages, including fouls, out-of-bounds, timeouts, and other referee stoppages.

1.4 Overtime

- **Regular Season:** One **3-minute overtime** will be played. The clock stops during the final **30 seconds**. Each coach receives **1 timeout** for overtime. Regulation timeouts do not carry over. If the game remains tied after overtime, the game ends in a tie.
- **Playoffs:** Additional 3-minute overtime periods will be played until there is a winner. Each team receives **1 timeout per overtime period**. Timeouts do not carry over between overtime periods.

CHAPTER 2 - PLAYERS, ROSTERS & GAME ELIGIBILITY

2.1 Number of Players

- Teams should have **5 players on the court**.
- A team must have at least **4 eligible players** to begin or continue a game.
- If either team has only 4 eligible players available, the game will be played **4v4**.
- If a team has fewer than 4 eligible players, the game is declared a forfeit.

2.2 Substitute Players

- **Substitute players are not permitted unless CSA management was notified of a player's absence and a substitute was approved and arranged by CSA at least 24 hours before the scheduled game time.**

- Teams may not independently find or bring substitute players.
- Any approved substitute must be authorized by CSA management before participating.

2.3 Jerseys

- Every player must wear their **CSA-issued team jersey** during games.
- A player may not participate without their issued jersey unless CSA gives prior approval.

CHAPTER 3 - PLAYING TIME & SUBSTITUTIONS

3.1 Playing Time

- CSA is a competitive league, but every registered player should receive meaningful opportunities to participate.
- Coaches are expected to provide all players with **meaningful playing time**.
- No player should sit for extended periods while other players play the entire game, except due to injury, illness, disciplinary reasons, late arrival, or other circumstances approved by CSA.
- CSA reserves the right to address playing-time situations that are clearly inconsistent with the purpose and expectations of the league.

3.2 Substitutions

- Coaches may substitute players throughout the game during appropriate stoppages in play.
- Players must report to the appropriate area and wait for the referee to allow them onto the court.

CHAPTER 4 - FOULS & BONUS

4.1 Bonus

- With **under 3 minutes remaining**, the bonus is in effect after **2 team fouls**.

4.2 1-and-1 Free Throws

- On a 1-and-1 situation, if the first free throw is missed, the clock begins once the ball becomes live.

4.3 Fouling Out - 7th & 8th Grade

- In the **7th & 8th grade division only**, a player fouls out after their **6th personal foul**.
- A technical foul counts as a personal foul.

CHAPTER 5 - DEFENSIVE & PRESS RULES

5.1 3rd-6th Grade

- Teams in the **3rd-4th and 5th-6th grade divisions** may play backcourt/full-court defense only during the **final 3 minutes of the game**.
- At all other times, the defensive team must retreat beyond half court and allow the offense to advance the ball.

5.2 7th-8th Grade

- Teams in the **7th & 8th grade division** may play backcourt/full-court defense during the **entire second half**.

5.3 Illegal Press

• When backcourt defense is not permitted, defenders must retreat beyond half court and the offensive team must be given an opportunity to advance the ball.

• The first violation may result in a warning.

• Repeated or intentional violations may result in a possession penalty or technical foul at the referee's discretion.

5.4 20-Point Lead Rule

• In **all divisions**, whenever a team leads by **20 points or more**, that team must play defense **inside the 3-point arc**.

• The leading team may not pressure the offense outside the 3-point arc.

• Once the lead falls below 20 points, the normal defensive rules for that division resume.

5.5 Aggressive Defense

• Referees have full discretion regarding overly aggressive or unsafe defensive play.

• Running into, bodying, or making excessive contact with an offensive player without a legitimate attempt to make a basketball play may be called a foul, intentional foul, or technical foul depending on the circumstances.

5.6 No Triple-Teaming - 3rd-4th & 5th-6th Grade

• In the **3rd-4th and 5th-6th grade divisions**, a maximum of **two defenders** may actively guard, trap, or pressure the same offensive player while that player has possession of the ball.

• A **triple-team** occurs when two defenders are already guarding a ballhandler and a third defender joins the pressure while the ballhandler still has possession. Simply standing nearby or guarding another player does not count as a triple-team.

• If a triple-team occurs, the referee will stop play and call a **dead ball**. The **offensive team retains possession** and will inbound from the nearest sideline. This includes situations where the third defender joins the pressure and the ball is knocked loose.

• If the ball is **already loose** before a third defender joins the play, that defender may attempt to recover it. This is **not** a triple-team violation.

• All triple-team calls, including whether a defender was actively pressuring the ballhandler and whether the ball was already loose, are **at the referees' discretion**. Referees' judgment calls are final.

CHAPTER 6 - TECHNICAL FOULS & EJECTIONS

6.1 Technical Fouls

• The following behavior may result in a technical foul: foul or inappropriate language, taunting, excessive arguing with officials, disrespectful behavior, or other unsportsmanlike conduct.

• A technical foul assessed to a player also counts as a personal foul.

6.2 Two Technical Fouls

• Any player or coach who receives **2 technical fouls in the same game** is automatically ejected.

• The individual must immediately leave the playing area and may not remain in the gym for the remainder of the game.

6.3 Flagrant Conduct

• Fighting, intentional attempts to harm another player, or other serious unsportsmanlike conduct will result in immediate ejection and may result in a multi-game suspension or additional discipline determined by CSA.

CHAPTER 7 - COACHES, BENCHES & SPECTATORS

7.1 Bench Area

• Only registered players, designated coaches, and CSA staff may be in the team bench area.

• Parents, siblings, and other spectators must remain in designated spectator areas.

7.2 Communication With Officials

• Only the team's **head coach** may respectfully approach or speak with an official regarding a rule clarification or game situation.

• Players, assistant coaches, parents, and spectators may not approach officials to argue or dispute calls.

7.3 Coach Conduct

• Coaches are responsible for representing CSA appropriately and setting an example for their players.

• Coaches must treat players, opposing coaches, officials, CSA staff, and spectators with respect at all times.

CHAPTER 8 - SPORTSMANSHIP & SPECTATOR CONDUCT

8.1 Player Sportsmanship

• Players are expected to compete hard while showing respect toward teammates, opponents, coaches, and officials.

• Taunting, threatening behavior, fighting, foul language, or intentional attempts to injure another player will not be tolerated.

8.2 Spectator Conduct

• Parents and spectators may cheer and support their teams but may not argue with referees, approach referees regarding calls, use inappropriate language, taunt players or coaches, enter the playing area without permission, or interfere with the game.

8.3 Team Penalties for Spectators

• Unsportsmanlike spectator behavior may result in a warning, technical foul assessed to the team, removal of the spectator from the gym, or additional action by CSA for repeated incidents.

CHAPTER 9 - GAME ARRIVAL & FORFEITS

9.1 Scheduled Game Time

• Teams and players should arrive early enough to be dressed and ready to play at their scheduled game time.

9.2 Grace Period

• A 5-minute grace period may be allowed when a team does not have the minimum number of players necessary to begin the game.

• After the grace period, CSA staff may declare the game a forfeit.

9.3 Keeping Games on Schedule

• Games will not be significantly delayed because players or teams arrive late.

• CSA reserves the right to shorten warmups, begin games without late players, or take other reasonable steps necessary to keep the day's schedule moving.

CHAPTER 10 - PLAYER SAFETY & EQUIPMENT

10.1 Jewelry

• Players may not wear watches, necklaces, bracelets, earrings, or other items that could present a safety risk during games.

• Referees have final discretion regarding whether an item must be removed before a player may participate.

10.2 Injuries

• A referee may stop play whenever they believe a player may be injured.

• CSA staff, officials, or coaches may prevent a player from returning to the game when there is a reasonable safety concern.

CHAPTER 11 - LEAGUE AUTHORITY & RULE INTERPRETATION

11.1 Referee Authority

• Referees have authority over all calls and decisions made during game play.

• Judgment calls made by officials are final.

11.2 CSA Authority

• Any situation not specifically addressed in this rulebook will be decided by **Cleveland Sports Association league staff**.

• CSA reserves the right to make decisions necessary to maintain player safety, fairness, sportsmanship, competitive balance, and the overall integrity of the league.

11.3 Rule Interpretation

• CSA may clarify or interpret a rule when an unusual situation occurs or when the written rule does not clearly address a specific circumstance.

11.4 Final Decisions

• Decisions made by CSA league staff regarding league rules, player eligibility, substitutions, discipline, competitive balance, or other league matters are final.