

MLGBA Rules for the 4th Grade

Substitutions: Games will consist of two twenty-minute halves with a five-minute half-time. You only have the gym for one hour—beginning and ending on the hour. If you run out of time, then you must shorten the game. Coaches should keep track of the time and make subs every 5 minutes. Both teams sub at the same time. Play should not stop to “set-up” the players, just make the subs. The girls need to learn how to do this without coach help. **The most important philosophy of the MLGBA is that everyone gets equal playing time. If you have less than ten players, you must rotate your players so that they all play the same amount of time. Everyone plays the same number of rotations—plan accordingly. Please use the substitution/rotation chart on the MLGBA website to help you plan your substitutions and keep to equal playing time. Never should any able-bodied player participate in less than 20 minutes of any game unless they are on a team with more than 10 players.**

Defense and Pressing: Only player to player defense is allowed. **No Zone defenses.** No pressing/defense in the backcourt at any time. Players can only play defense within the 3-point line. Stealing off the pass, the dribble, or a held ball is allowed. Double teaming and trapping are discouraged, but likely to occur when defending ball screens. They are acceptable in this circumstance only. Once the other team gets the ball on defense, everyone must drop back and let the ball be brought down.

Jump Ball: The game starts with a jump ball, after that it is alternating possession. The coach/ref should keep track of possession. The teams will switch baskets at the half.

Scoring and Standings: Score will be kept on a flip chart or electronic scoreboard when available. Please get a volunteer to keep score every game. There are no standings or playoffs but scores will be kept each individual game. Coaches need to watch the score and be mindful about running it up (see pointers below for ways to pull back while still having the girls play and have fun)

Fouls: Players will be disqualified on the 5th foul. You must substitute a player who is not already playing the maximum amount of time (for example, if you have 9 players some will play 5 rounds and some 4 rounds – if a player fouls out you need to pick someone who has only played 4 rounds and not pick your star player to play a 6th round unless there are no other options – equal playing time trumps over using your star player). No subbing for foul trouble. It’s a technical foul if you do not write your players' last names and numbers in the scorebook prior to the game. Any coach or player who receives 2 technical fouls in the season will be suspended for 1 game and the situation must be discussed with the grade commissioner. You cannot substitute a player “in foul trouble” in the middle of the 5 minute rotation.

Violations to be called: Backcourt, double dribbling, travelling, out-of-bounds, jump ball (alternate possession), “5” seconds in the lane. **Lane Violations:** five (5) seconds

Uniforms: League shorts and shirts only. Shirrtails must be tucked in. No Uniform = No Play. No sweat pants. Make sure your players remove all jewelry. If a player is found to be wearing jewelry she should be removed from play until the jewelry is removed—this includes earrings (unless newly pierced then they need to be covered with thick medical tape and a Release may need to be signed). Please have the girls keep their fingernails trimmed.

Time Outs: 2 short time outs per game—remember, you only have the gym for an hour. Time spent talking is time lost from playing.

Game/Practice Cancellations: All games are on unless otherwise stated on the League website www.mlgba.com. Practices are canceled if the Lower Merion schools are closed that day for whatever reason.

Officials: MLGBA will be using teenage refs for the 4th grade. This was started in the 2012-2013 season with great results and we will continue this year. The referees will make mistakes – they are learning. Officiating mistakes happen at every level of basketball. Remember that the teams are made up of our daughters who are playing to learn the game and to have fun. This is not the NCAA or the WNBA. Please exercise good judgment during the game. Set a good example for your daughter(s) and accept each call graciously. The game will go on, the ref will leave the gym with his or her ego intact and your daughter(s) will have had a good day. This is a teaching league not only for players but also for young women to develop their confidence in reffing and increase the number of women who referee. Someday your daughter may be a ref. No critical comments to the ref; we all make mistakes.

Coach's Area – Teams are limited to two coaches per team during the game and only one can be standing – the other coach must be on the bench with the team giving individual instruction/handling substitutions, etc. We want the girls to be focused on the game and making their own decisions and two coaches standing and shouting instructions is not helpful. If you want an additional coach to help during practices that's fine but only two coaches at each game. During the game, coaches must stay on the sideline between the 28ft line and the baseline and are not permitted on the court. The 28ft line is a little above the 3pt line; all high school gyms will have a black line at this spot, if not the refs find a line closest to it. Coaches should not be running up and down the sideline to coach their players. The players should remain seated on the bench except for time outs and substitutions. Each team may only have coaches and substitutes on the bench. Anyone else on the bench (including siblings of players or coaches' other kids) will result in a Technical Foul. If any coach is assessed a Technical foul, said coach loses the privilege if standing and must remain seated for the duration of the game.

Each coach should have a first aid kit and ice packs at every game as well as a game ball.

There is Zero Tolerance on this issue: There may be a situation where a coach feels the safety of his/her players is at risk. In this situation, the two head coaches and the ref should conference at half time to decide how best to control aggressive play. This is a matter of communication, respect and cooperation, not a time for accusation and argument. Solve the problem and play the game. Report concerns regarding rough play or weak officiating to the commissioners

Gyms: Respect each facility or we may not be invited back. **Food and drink are not permitted**, except sealed water bottles for the players. Don't bring your coffee into the early morning games and tell parents to do the same, if you see it. Siblings and guests must sit and watch and no playing, roaming or jumping on equipment. No pets and please clean up before leaving and take all of your team's belongings. The last teams to play at the gym on either practice nights or game days should police the gym before leaving, lock up and turn off the lights where necessary.

Absences: Coaches should be called at least 48 hours (or ASAP) if players cannot make either games or practices. A coach must be present as long as there are players present. If you cannot make a practice, make sure someone is covering for you or you cancel it.

Practices: Make sure the girls are as active as possible throughout the practice. If your gym is unavailable for any reason and you would like a different practice site, email your Commissioner as soon as possible.

Ensuring fun for all: The purpose of organizing teams by a draft is to create teams that will be equally competitive. Sometimes, we fail. In any case, it is the coach's duty in the MLGBA to see to it that, win or lose, each girl has a positive experience during the season. Learning to lose, although not a goal, is as important as learning to win. Remember, if your team is up by 10 points or more, you must take measures to see to it that you keep the score relatively close. No one should win by large margins . That means, if you are up by a lot please pull your players back using the methods below.

Some suggestions for controlling an unbalanced game:

- a) there should be no fast breaks,
- b) players should make four passes before shooting the ball,
- c) no stealing,
- d) have the strong players feed the weak players,
- e) rein in your stars and, if they don't listen, sit them down
- f) the defense should be pulled back to the lane. If you encounter a problem with coaches, players, or fans that is not easily resolved, contact a commissioner.