

2026
MARCH MADNESS
3rd - 6th Grade Rules

Updated 3/27/26

1. Playing Times

- Be on time! All games & practices must start and finish on time. Gym time is tight, clear your team off court & bench quickly.
- **EVERY PLAYER GETS EQUAL PLAY TIME EVERY GAME!!** Substitutions should occur appx. every 4 minutes of clock running time (segment sheet attached).

The following chart lists the minimum and maximum number of segments to be played:

PLAYERS	MINIMUM SEGMENTS	MAXIMUM SEGMENTS
6	6	7
7	5	6
8	5	5
9	4	5
10	4	4

- 5 minutes for team warmups. 3-minute half-time break. 30 second breaks in between periods 1 & 2 and periods 3 & 4. Each team gets two 1-minute time outs per game. Time outs do not carry over into an overtime game.
- Each of the 4 quarters will be 8 minutes running clock, with exception of 4th period final minute and if neither team is ahead by 12 points or more.
- One overtime period of two (2) minutes will be allowed. If the score remains tied, the game will be declared a tie game. Each team gets one 1-minute time out in overtime.

THE CLOCK WILL BE STOPPED FOR:

- All timeouts (two 1-minute time outs for each team are allowed).
- For all shooting fouls. It restarts when the ball is presented to the shooter for a 2nd shot or upon the miss of the 1st shot.
- For player substitution time each period (30 seconds allowed sub quickly!).
- For injuries.
- On all officials' whistles during the last minute of the fourth quarter and final minute of an overtime game (with the exception of a 12-point differential).

2. Defense

- Man-to-man defense or zone defense may be played. No double teaming or trapping is permitted outside of the key (the key is the rectangular painted area extending from the baseline to the free-throw line). However, once a player enters the key defenders may double team.
- Once the defensive team gets clear possession of a rebound, the opposing team must allow them control and drop back past half court to inside the 3-point arc.
- **3rd/4th GRADE:** Hands up defense. **Defenders are not permitted to steal off the dribble or steal the ball out of the hand(s) of the offensive player or attempt to tie the ball up for a jump ball, but they can steal the ball on a pass or loose ball. However, once a player enters the key defenders are permitted to steal off the dribble or out of the hand(s) of the offensive player.** No full court pressing. Defenders should pick up defenders inside the 3-point arc. However, in the 4th period ONLY defenders may pick up man-to-man defense at the half-court line. There is no double-teaming or trapping outside of the key (the key is the rectangular painted area extending from the baseline to the free-throw line). A team MAY NOT press at half court if winning by 12 points or more, they must drop back & pick up opponent inside the 3-point arc. The offensive team must continue to move the ball down the court & not stall in the backcourt.

- **5th/6th GRADE:** No full court pressing in 1st, 2nd & 3rd quarters. Full court press is allowed by one-on-one defense (no trapping or double-teaming) during the entire 4th quarter and throughout any overtime periods. However, a team may not full court press with a lead of twelve (12) points or more. **The offensive team must continue to move the ball down the court & not stall in the backcourt.**

3. Fast break Rules

- Keep fast breaks to a minimum, doing so will allow the game to slow down & offensive players to set up and run plays taught in practice.

4. Equipment and Scoring

- ALL JEWELRY MUST BE REMOVED BEFORE PRACTICES AND GAMES TO PREVENT INJURIES.
- Balls used: 27.5" for 3rd/4th graders & 28.5" for 5th/6th graders.
- A first aid kit is available in the downstairs office if one is not out on scorekeeper table. Ice packs are located in white frig in the office as well.
- 3-point shots will be scored as 3 points.
- If score becomes very one-sided at half time, you can reset the scoreboard to zero if both coaches agree.
- Players must have the same-colored shirts or jerseys. (Pennies are available in the office if needed.)

5. Coaches Rules and Bench Conduct

- Safety always comes first.
- Coaches must have starting players "game ready" prior to the end of the five-minute warm-up period.
- Only team players and a maximum of two (2) coaches are allowed on a team bench. All players on the bench must be seated throughout the game.
- Coaches are responsible for team and parental behavior. Coaches, parents, players, and spectators should focus on the spirit of the league. Unsportsmanlike conduct **WILL NOT BE TOLERATED**, especially if directed toward game officials or participants. **(March Madness Code of Conduct attached)**

6. Gym Rules

- No black-rubber soled tennis shoes.
- All water bottles and drinks must be kept on the bench. **MAKE SURE YOUR PLAYERS LEAVE WITH WHAT THEY CAME WITH!**
- No food or drinks on court.
- **TEAM PRACTICES:** Should consist of team drills that focus on basic fundamentals – dribbling, passing, rebounding, shooting, foot work, moving without ball, running a few basic plays, etc. You can scrimmage the last 15 minutes of practice IF you think that benefits your team. **Please do not scrimmage the entire practice time.**
- Clear bench area of all trash for the next team and put anything left behind in the lost and found located at the bottom of the east end stairwell. Clean up after your weekly team practices, as well.

--- SEE CODE OF CONDUCT ATTACHED ---

CODE OF CONDUCT

OCC March Madness Basketball

The following list serves as a Code of Conduct for coaches, players, parents and fans.

Coaches:

- The coach will not criticize players in front of spectators. Use a positive approach when coaching.
- The coach will accept the decisions of officials.
- The coach will not criticize the officials, the opposing team, the coaches, fans or parents through language or gesture.
- The coach will emphasize that good athletes are good students, and both are physically and mentally alert.
- The coach will strive to make every basketball activity serve as a training ground for life and as a basis for good mental and physical health.
- The coach will emphasize that winning a game is the result of teamwork.
- The coach shall not use abusive or profane language in front of anyone connected with the game.
- The coach will refrain from “running up” the score against an opponent.
- The coach shall not be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- The coach will set an example in personal conduct at all times.
- The coach will treat each player, opposing coach, parent and referee with respect and dignity.
- The coach will learn the strengths and weakness of his/her players in order to place them into situations where each has a maximum opportunity to achieve success.
- The coach will protect the health and safety of his/her players by insisting that all of the activities under his/her control be conducted for their psychological and physiological welfare, rather than the interests of adults.

Players:

- Have fun!
- Be a good sport (win or lose), be honest, fair and always show good sportsmanship to all coaches, players, referees and fans.
- Learn the value of commitment to the team.
- Put personal goals aside for the betterment of the team.
- Show courtesy and respect to teammates, opponents and coaches.
- Realize that athletic contests, including practice sessions, are educational experiences and opportunities.
- Players will not engage in unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Players will not engage in rude behavior.
- Treat everyone, including coaches, parents, players and referees, with respect, regardless of race, creed, color, nationality or gender.

Parents/Fans:

- Give constructive criticism during a private moment, never in front of other parents, players, referees, spectators, etc.
- Support your coach and refrain from excessive “sideline coaching” from the stands.
- Do not use profanity.
- Abide by a doctor’s decision in all matters of players health and injuries and physical ability to play.
- Accept the decisions of referees on the court as being fair and called to the best ability of the referee. Parents must stay off the court and remain under control in order to set a good example for players and other spectators.
- Do not criticize an opposing team, its players, fans, coaches or team by words or gestures.
- Support the coaches, players and referees and help teach the value of commitment to the teams, sportsmanship, ethical conduct and fair play.
- Inappropriate behavior is cause for immediate ejection from the stands. Repeat offenses will result in being barred from future games and league sponsored activities.
- Parents will not encourage their child or any other person to engage in unsportsmanlike conduct with any coach, parent, player, participants, referees or any other attendee.

