

Great Valley Basketball League Rules

Guidelines for coaches:

- The main goal of GVBL is skill development, helping players improve, and showing good sportsmanship. No "set" offenses should be taught in the 1/2 division. In older divisions, more advanced concepts can be introduced, but the focus should still be primarily on skill development.
- In our younger divisions, some special rules are in place to allow players of all abilities to compete. These rules are "judgement calls" and difficult to make. Please respect and support our referees.
- Coaches are not permitted on the court during play. They must remain in the area of the bench. Only one coach is permitted to stand during the game.
- Equal playing time for all players on the team is a strict requirement. This includes playoffs and OT periods. All players, irrespective of skill level, deserve a chance to play in all types of circumstances (starting the game, ending the game, playing in OT, etc). First and foremost this is a recreational league.
- Have fun and be a positive influence.

Game administration:

- 1/2 and 3/4 divisions use an 8½ foot rim height. Older divisions use a 10 foot rim height.
- Boys 7/8 plays with a full size (29.5 inch) ball. All other divisions use an intermediate (28.5 inch) size ball.
- In all divisions except 1/2, standings will be kept, with a playoff tournament in which all teams participate at the end of the season.
- Jump ball starts the game – then alternate possessions for each jump ball and the start of the 2nd half.
- Each team is granted two timeouts per half. No timeouts in 1/2 division. Timeouts do not carry forward. If a timeout is called during a free throw attempt during a running clock period (i.e. outside the last two minutes), the clock will restart when play resumes after all free throws are shot.
- Teams must start each game with 5 players from their team. If 5 players are not available at game time, a 5 minute grace period will be granted. If after 5 minutes, there are not 5 players ready to participate, the team forfeits. After the grace period ends and the game is ruled a forfeit, coaches should agree on how to play the game, and first option is to lend players from opponent. If not enough players are available, then another REGISTERED GVBL player in that division can participate. No non-GVBL registered players may ever participate. If a 5th player shows up after the 5 minute grace period, the game is still a forfeit, but this player should join his teammates and the game continues. In the unlikely event neither team has five players:
 - If both teams have exactly four players after the grace period, the game will be played "four on four" and count as usual. If a 5th player arrives late, the game will continue as 4-on-4 with the arriving player(s) used as a sub.
 - If one team has four players after the grace period while the other has three or less, the team with four players will win by forfeit.
 - If neither team has four players, the game will count as a loss for both. If this occurs in the playoffs, GVBL leadership will determine the appropriate outcome.
- The game will consist of two 20-minute halves. In general, the clock will run during the game at all times with the exception of timeouts or injuries. In the 1/2 and 3/4 divisions, the clock will stop on every whistle in the last two minutes of the game. In the 5/6 and 7/8 divisions, the clock will stop on every whistle in the last two minutes of each half. Note that the clock does not stop after a made field goal (there is no whistle).
- Substitutions:
 - For 1/2 and 3/4 divisions, the referee will stop the game at five-minute intervals for substitutions (coaches can remind officials when it is time, but may not stop the game). Players will come to half court and match up for defensive assignment purposes. Line players up quickly – this is not

- meant to be a timeout. The team possessing the ball prior to the substitution stoppage will remain in possession when play restarts.
- For 5/6 and 7/8 divisions, subs can occur on any stoppage of play (referee whistle). Coaches/ players must ask permission to official; players may not come on floor until permission is granted.
- There is a 10-point mercy rule in the 1/2 division: once a team is up by 10, stop adding points until the other team reduces the deficit to 8. There is no explicit mercy rule in older divisions but coaches should use common sense and good sportsmanship. In no event will point differential be used as a tiebreaker for playoff seedings, and coaches should never “run up the score”.
- These rules and guidelines will not address every possible situation. Referees and coaches should be good leaders in disputed situations and determine a solution that exemplifies good sportsmanship and doing what is best for our kids.

Defensive Guidelines:

GVBL has a strong belief in the philosophy that man-to-man defense is the best way for players to develop their defensive skills. Accordingly, no zone defense is permitted at any time, and only man-to-man defense may be played. However, to ensure healthy competition, the enforcement of this rule varies by age:

- In the 1/2 and 3/4 divisions:
 - A defensive “free zone” exists – no defense may be played outside the 3-point line. Players should hustle back into defensive position following a change of possession without defending on the way. Defenders may stand behind the 3-point line and “lean over” to steal the ball. In the 3/4 division only, the defensive restriction moves to half court in the last two minutes of the game and OT.
 - Defenders generally must closely guard their player (i.e. be within arms length). However, there are instances when a defender may guard another player:
 - On a fast break: any player or players can stop the ball on a fast break.
 - Any time there is a screen being set: defenders can switch, and in many cases this could lead to briefly double teaming the ball or the screener. Coaches concerned about these “double teams” should advise their team not to set screens.
 - A player may also defend an opponent who dribbles into them, provided the defender remains within arm’s length of his man (offensive players need to learn not to dribble into opponents).
 - Please note that the above circumstances are judgement calls and will be determined by our officials. These are very difficult calls to make so please be patient with officials.
 - Any offensive sets designed to gimmick our defensive rules will not be tolerated (example: have one player with ball and have other players stand in the corners). If this occurs, referees should blow the whistle and have a conversation with coaches. Our rules are not meant to be gimmicked and used to gain an offensive advantage. Teams may not “stall” (e.g. holding ball outside the free zone when they have a lead).
- In the 5/6 and 7/8 divisions:
 - Defensive players can begin to guard their man at half court. Full court pressing can occur in the last two minutes of the 1st half, the last four minutes of the 2nd half, and any overtime period.
 - Teams must play man-to-man defense. No zone defenses are allowed, including when pressing. Unlike in younger divisions, we do not enforce an “arms length” rule at this level – “help defense” is permitted/encouraged. The intent of the rule in these divisions is to prohibit actual zone defenses, not to restrict the defensive activity of a player within a man-to-man defense. The following are examples of allowable actions on defense:
 - Help defense when an opponent beats their man
 - Leaving your man to double team another player
 - Trapping
 - Sagging into the lane to protect the basket while your player is on the perimeter
 - Switching off your man often when opponent screens or runs dribble handoffs

Rule Guidelines:

Rules will generally be governed by NFHS high school rules except where altered below.

- Personal and Team Fouls are tracked, a player will foul out on their 5th foul. Teams will shoot 1-and-1 on the 7th team foul each half and two shots on the 10th team foul. **Note this rule applies in summer also.**
- Shooting fouls will be called. During shooting fouls the clock will continue to run, except during a period when the clock is stopped on whistles (e.g. the last two minutes of the game, or following timeout).
- Free throws:
 - Players lined up on the lane may move on the release. Shooter and anyone not positioned on the lane may not enter the restricted area until the shot hits the rim. **Note this is a change in 1/2 and 3/4 divisions from prior years.**
 - Position of shooter:
 - 1/2 and 3/4 divisions: The shooter is permitted to shoot a “modified” free throw by taking one step over the line closer to the basket.
 - 5/6 and 7/8 divisions: The shooter must begin and end their shot behind the line. Exception: in Girls 5/6 only, the shooter may land over the line as long as they start their shot behind the line.
 - All divisions: any player shooting a “modified” free throw (i.e. starting or landing over the line) may not rebound. Players shooting a “regular” free throw may rebound as normal.
- When the ball is taken out of bounds the defense must give at least three feet of space to the inbounder. In most places at the GVBL center there is less than three feet of space out of bounds, so officials should instruct defenders to stand back off the line to allow for room.
- Yelling at an opponent while they are shooting is unsportsmanlike behavior and will not be tolerated. Players should be told by coaches not to do this, and if the behavior persists a technical foul will be assessed.
- No free throws will be shot on technical, intentional, or flagrant fouls – the other team will be awarded two points and possession. All fouls count toward team and individual foul counts. These fouls are summarized below:
 - Unsportsmanlike technical fouls are assessed for inappropriate conduct, including but not limited to: profanity, taunting, and excessive complaining about calls. A 2nd technical assessed to any individual will result in the player/coach/fan having to leave the gym. In flagrant situations (e.g. fighting) a player may be ejected after only one occurrence, at the discretion of the official.
 - Procedural technical fouls are assessed for violations such as too many players on the floor or calling a timeout when none are left. Officials should try to prevent these situations by counting players before inbounding, reminding coaches when they are out of timeouts, etc. But ultimate responsibility lies with the coach.
 - An intentional foul is a deliberate act that results in unnecessary contact or an unfair advantage. Intentional fouls include:
 - Intentional contact that neutralizes an obvious opponent advantage (e.g. grabbing a player from behind to prevent a layup)
 - Intentional contact away from the ball with an opponent not involved in the play
 - Excessive contact that is not an attempt to play the ball
 - Fouls at the end of the game to force free throws should generally NOT be ruled intentional, unless they fall into one of the categories above
 - A flagrant foul is a violent action displaying unacceptable, non-basketball-related conduct, such as: fighting, punching, or kicking. A player committing a flagrant foul is ejected on their first offense.

- Other special rules for 1/2 and 3/4 divisions only:
 - No 3-pointers (a shot made from beyond the 3 point line will only count for 2 points)
 - Screening:
 - Screening is not permitted in the 1/2 division
 - Screening is allowed in the 3/4 division, but no back screens or double screens (two players setting a simultaneous screen on a single defender) are allowed at this level
 - Backcourt violations are not called in the 1/2 division but players should be coached to prepare for 3/4. Backcourt violations are called in 3/4.
 - In the 1/2 division only, all throw-ins from out of bounds are taken out on the sidelines above the Free Zone line. No inbounds will be taken under the basket at this level except following a made shot.

When the game ends in a tied score:

- Games in the 1/2 division will end in a tie; all other divisions will play overtime.
- Each overtime period is two minutes in length and will start with a jump ball. The clock will stop on all whistles in overtime (same as the end of regulation).
- Pressing and/or free zone rules will carry forward the same as at the end of regulation.
- Team foul counts continue from the 2nd half.
- Each team is granted 1 timeout in OT. None of the previous timeouts carry forward.
- Equal playing time will continue to be strictly enforced in overtime. Any player on the bench at the end of regulation should start the OT period. All players should get to experience the excitement of OT. In the 3/4 division, referees should stop the clock at the 1-minute mark to allow substitutions.
- If tied after first OT period, a sudden death period occurs during regular season. First point (free throw or field goal) determines the winner and the game ends. In playoffs, full 2-minute overtimes will be played until there is a winner.