



UNDER
THE
STRIPES

BASKETBALL

RULES REFERENCE

HIGH SCHOOL OFFICIALS QUICK GUIDE

2026-27 NFHS

CODE & GENDER APPLICATION

The NFHS playing code applies to boys and girls; state adoptions may differ.

Study aid only. Always use the current official rulebook, interpretations, mechanics manual, state or conference adoptions, bulletins and assignment instructions.

THE STORIES BEHIND THE CALLS

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UNDER THE STRIPES NETWORK | VERIFIED JULY 23, 2026

Core Contest Framework

Start here before moving into situation-specific study.

Topic	Quick reference
Players / game	5 players per team; four 8-minute quarters are the NFHS standard. State adoptions may differ.
Court / baskets	84 x 50 feet is common for high school; 94 x 50 is permitted. Basket height is 10 feet.
Possession	Start game and each extra period with a jump ball; use the alternating-possession procedure for held-ball and designated situations.
Team fouls	Two free throws beginning with the fifth team foul in each quarter; team-foul count resets each quarter.
Timeouts	Three 60-second and two 30-second timeouts per game; unused timeouts carry into extra periods, plus one additional 60-second timeout per extra period.
Overtime	Four minutes unless the state association adopts otherwise.

Pregame Crew Checklist

- Confirm jurisdiction, start time, contest level, crew assignments and state/local modifications.
- Inspect playing area, equipment, clocks, team/bench areas and required game personnel.
- Conduct the required coaches/captains meeting; address sportsmanship and unusual ground/facility conditions.
- Review timing, substitution, timeout, penalty and end-of-period/inning procedures.
- Establish crew communication, primary coverage, rotations, help situations and emergency procedures.

Primary Coverage & Mechanics

Use the current NFHS officials manual and your state mechanics. Maintain a patient whistle/flag, officiate your primary, expand only when necessary, and communicate decisive information to the crew before enforcement.

High-Priority Rules

Area	What the official must know
Game clock correction	In the final 59.9 seconds of a quarter or extra period, a throw-in may use a 0.3-second timing adjustment when the ball is legally touched and the clock fails to start. Apply the 2026-27 rule and case guidance.
Catch-and-shoot minimum	With 0.3 second or less, a player may score only by a tap. A try caught and released cannot count.
Boundary / throw-in	Know designated-spot versus running-the-end-line rights; administer warnings and delay penalties correctly.
Verticality / legal guarding	Judge legal guarding position, vertical plane, displacement and freedom of movement - do not officiate reaction alone.
Goaltending / basket interference	Offensive goaltending was removed in 2025-26; basket interference restrictions still apply.
Uniforms / equipment	Enforce legal numbers, contrasting requirements, undershirts, sleeves, jewelry and jerseys worn as intended.

Gender & Competition Differences

Area	Application
Rule book	Same NFHS rules for boys and girls.
Ball size	Boys commonly use size 7 (29.5-inch); girls use size 6 (28.5-inch). Confirm approved ball and state requirements.
Shot clock	Not universal under NFHS. State adoption can apply differently by gender; verify the host state.
Game length / mercy	May be modified by state or level, not by gender in the national rule itself.

Important

A boys/girls distinction is included only where an actual equipment, dimension, adoption or competition difference exists. The absence of a separate section means the same NFHS playing rule applies.

Situations to Review

Situation	Crew response / study point
0.2 on clock; throw-in caught and shot	Wave off even if released before horn; only a tap can score.
Fifth team foul of quarter	Award two free throws for a common foul committed by the team not in control, subject to exceptions.
Correctable error discovered	Stop only when allowed, identify the correctable-error window, correct all permitted activity, and resume at the proper point.
Coach questions a judgment call	Report calmly, provide concise rule-based information when appropriate, then return focus to live-ball coverage.

Postgame Self-Review

- Which ruling required the strongest rules knowledge?
- Did the crew communicate ball status, clock status, penalty/foul details and restart correctly?
- Was any call made outside a primary without clear necessity?
- What rule, case play or mechanic should be verified before the next assignment?
- What one crew adjustment would improve consistency?

Official References

NFHS Basketball Rules

<https://nfhs.org/sports/basketball/rules>

2026-27 Rules Changes

<https://nfhs.org/stories/clock-adjustments-addressed-to-support-officials-in-2026-27-high-school-basketball-rules-changes>

2026-27 Points of Emphasis

<https://nfhs.org/resources/sports/basketball-points-of-emphasis-2026-27>

RULES DISCLAIMER

This educational quick reference is not an official rules book and does not reproduce the complete NFHS code. Rules, interpretations and state adoptions change. Before every season and assignment, consult the current NFHS rules book, case book, officials manual, your state high school association and the contest administrator.