

2026 RYB Game Rules – 4th/5th Grades (Jan 5, 2026)

Except as modified below, current rules of the PA Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA, piaa.gov) apply.

Rule disputes will be resolved by the Referees after consultation with the coaches. The Referees' ultimate decisions on points, fouls, and violations are final. Game protests will not be permitted.

If there is no game manager for a game, teams will need to recruit one coach or adult to serve as scorekeeper (to run the scoreboard) – contact League Registrar about game managers (for most games at Sulpizio and RMS).

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY – ALL DIVISIONS - ALL GRADES

- All players, coaches, volunteers, referees, or spectators must abide by all policies, rules, and behavior requirements of the league.
- Any player, coach, volunteer, referee, or spectator can be ejected by a ref or be suspended or refused further participation in league activities due to any unacceptable behavior, actions, communications, complaints, threats, reports of illegal or inappropriate activities, etc. at the sole discretion and decision of the officers of the league.
- Adult coaches/supervisors are responsible to report unsupervised minors in/near the gym during a team's gym use. Call school security or Bonnie Cotter if no responsible adult is supervising minors - referees are not responsible for the actions of unsupervised minors.

Game Rules - 4th and 5th Grades (4th Grade rules apply if there is a combined 4th/5th grade division)

1. **Ball size** - 28.5" – size 6 (20 oz.); for Boys and Girls
2. **Basket height** – 10 feet (may be lowered by agreement of coaches with division commissioner)
3. **Scoreboard** – A **Game Manager** may be assigned to run the scoreboard. Otherwise, a team should find someone to run the scoreboard.
4. **Scorekeeper** – Each team's scorekeeper should sit at the scorer's table or close by, record the scores during the game, keep track of player and team fouls and inform coaches accordingly.
5. **Scoring** - 3-point line is in effect on courts where there is a 3-point line
6. **Game Time**
 - a. **Running Clock - 2 halves** – 20 minutes each, 3 minute halftime break, running clock **except last 2 minutes of the game** (end of 2nd half of the game, but **not in the 1st half**), **3 min halftime**
 - b. Referee will allow a 3 to 5 minute warmup period unless games are delayed more than 10 mins.
 - c. Warmup starts BEFORE designated game time, unless previous game ended late.
 - d. The game clock will start no later than 1 minute after the 3-5 minute warmup period.
 - e. Each team needs 5 players on the court before play can begin – If clock runs for 10 minutes without play beginning, the team with less than 5 players will record a forfeit. (Once a game starts, game can continue even if a team can't put 5 players on the court - When there is only one player participating for a team, the team shall forfeit the game, unless the referee believes that team has an opportunity to win the game.)
 - f. **Time-outs** (clock stops) – 3 time-outs per game - 30 seconds each (no carryover in overtime)
 - a. **Overtime (OT)** – **3 minute running clock except the last minute** (*ref may cancel OT, if games are running very late and if allowing OT play will further back up the remaining games of the day*).
 - i. **Only 1 overtime period** (3 min) - starts 1 minute after regular time expires.
 - ii. Any 5 team players (except if fouled out) can play in the overtime period.

- iii. No Overtime Subs - except for ejections, injuries and fouling out.
- iv. **No time-outs in overtime.**
- v. Overtime period starts with jump ball – teams defend same baskets as 2nd half.

7. Substitutions (Refs may remind coaches of guidelines; report violations to Division Commissioner.)

- a. Substitutions <league guidelines> – Refs whistles for subs every 5 mins (approx.) of game time – 4 rotations per half – See Player Rotation Grid on website.
- b. Substitutions should be ready prior to the 5 minute marks - subs enter when ref allows.
- c. Substitutions for an injured player, a player who fouls out or is ejected can occur at any time. An injured player may re-enter the game after their injuries are attended to.
- d. **Running Clock** does not stop for subs. Clock runs unless a time-out is called.
- e. If Subs are taking too long (15 secs), the ref may charge a team a time-out for delay of game.
- f. Refs are not responsible for enforcing substitution guidelines.
- g. All players (up to 5) out of the game for 5 consecutive minutes MUST sub in at the 5 min marks in each half, except for injury/other issues. A coach who clearly violates this rule may be suspended for the next game if warranted.
- h. During substitutions, coaches will be permitted 15 seconds to match up players but the coaches are not permitted on the court to do this. The referee will put the ball in play 15 seconds after the stoppage for substitutions. Matchups are allowed at the start of the game, 2nd half or OT.
- i. Players arriving late or leaving early – NO make-up missed playing time for making subs.
- j. <common courtesy> The same players should not start and/or finish every game.
- k. <common courtesy> Coaches - Please make sure that playing time is divided up as evenly as possible among the players on your team. No players should repeatedly play more time than other players on the team who regularly attend games and practices.
- l. If a team has 6 to 10 players at a game:
 - i. No player sits out for consecutive rotations in a half (5 mins of game time per rotation)
 - ii. A player sitting out at end of 1st half may also sit out at the start of 2nd half
 - iii. 10 players – every player sits out for 4 rotations
 - iv. 9 players – every player sits out at least 3 rotations
 - v. 8 players – every player sits out at least 3 rotations
 - vi. 7 players – every player sits out at least 2 rotations
 - vii. 6 players – every player sits out at least 1 rotation
- m. If a team has 11 - 12 players at a game - A player may sit out for consecutive rotations only once.
- n. Player Health/Behavior Exceptions – A coach may sub for a player with significant health or behavioral concerns. At a break in play, a coach may ask the refs for time to address the concerns and replace the player with a sub if needed. Clock stops; no time out charged.

8. Referees – 1 or 2 paid refs may be provided. If no ref is available, coaches/parents will need to fill in.**9. 5 second lane violation** – change possession - ref may warn a 4th grade player enforcing a lane violation**10. Foul Limit**

- a. 6 personal fouls - player is disqualified (fouls out) on the 6th personal foul.
- b. Coaches must keep a record of their player fouls.
- c. A player with 3 personal fouls in the 1st half can be replaced at the ref's next call for subs and that player may sit out for the remainder of the 1st half.

11. Foul Shots

- a. Foul shots (free throws) taken only for shooting fouls (2 free throws).
- b. Clock runs for free throws, except within the last 2 minutes of the 2nd half (not in the 1st half).
- c. No bonus free throws (no team foul limit).

12. Technical, Intentional and Flagrant Fouls

- a. A player or coach may be ejected after 2 direct technical fouls or 1 flagrant foul are assessed).
- b. An intentional foul is a personal (direct) or technical foul, but is not the same as a flagrant foul.

13. Defense

- a. Man to man only, but help side defense is acceptable. Division commissioners should get coaches' agreement prior to season if some use of zone or other defenses will be allowed.
- b. Refs will not call violations or govern use of any particular defense. Any violations of league agreements must be taken up with the division commissioner AFTER the game is complete.
- c. No Full Court Press (no back court press) at any time. Coaches cannot override.
- d. Coaches are responsible for abiding by agreements to the defenses allowed.
- e. Refs will call an illegal defense violation if a team violates the Limited Defense rules.

14. Time Limit in Back Court –

- a. **(4th grade)** 5 second combined limit to advance ball out of Back Court and Free Zone
Violation – no turnover – offense inbounds ball in front court – free zone does not apply
- b. **(5th grade)** 5 second time limit to advance ball out of Back Court (no free zone for 5th grade)
Violation – ball is turned over to opponent

15. Limited Defense – Fast Break/Intercept/Loose Ball – in Back Court

- a. Limited Defense may defend (one on one) only against the player **running** with the ball for a fast break – but no turnover allowed (no ball stealing) – allows a defender to slow down the offense
- b. **(4th grade)** Limited Defense **may not** – intercept a pass or grab a loose ball
- c. **(5th grade)** Limited Defense **may** – intercept a pass or grab a loose ball in the Back Court
- d. Limited Defense **may not** – trap, steal or closely guard the ball handler who is standing, holding, or walking (i.e., not running) in Back Court (or in Free Zone for **4th grade**)
- e. Refs will call an illegal defense violation if a team violates the Limited Defense rules.

16. Free Zone (4th grade) – no defense or turnover in free zone – Limited Defense only in Back Court

- a. Use the top of key (top point of 3 point arc) as the reference point for a straight free zone line (imaginary) parallel to foul line and half court line, extending across the court - the free zone will exist behind this reference line, only until the ball crosses this free zone line.
- b. Once ball crosses free zone line, free zone no longer exists until there is a change in possession.
- c. Coaches will need to agree with ref on location of the free zone line prior to the game starting - the free zone will be the area between the half court line and the free zone line.
- d. 5 second combined back court/free zone violation – total time limit to move ball out of back court and free zone – ref whistles but offensive team gets possession back out of bounds - inside the front court - free zone no longer exists until there is a change of possession.

17. Ejections / Suspensions

- a. Anyone may be ejected from a game for any inappropriate behavior or other violation of RYB's **ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY**. A ref may stop the game. No technical foul for spectator actions.
- b. An adult coach or adult spectator who is ejected must leave the gym location. A player or student coach under 18 who is ejected must remain on the team sidelines and be supervised by the team's adult coach/manager/supervisor. An ejected spectator or player under 18 may leave the gym if escorted by their parent, guardian or an adult responsible for them.
- c. Anyone ejected from a game, or who has behaved inappropriately at RYB events, or via social media, or other means, are subject to further action or discipline if warranted.
- d. Repeated inappropriate behavior must be reported to RYB officers and may result in temporary suspension or permanent expulsion of any person from the league.