

WCSU
Elementary Schools
Athletics Manual

Berlin
Calais
East Montpelier
Doty (Worcester)
Rumney (Middlesex)

Soccer
Basketball

2009-2010

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PLEASE ALSO NOTE GENERAL EXPECTATIONS, WHICH APPLY TO ALL ORGANIZED ATHLETICS EXPERIENCES. (see page 8)

Philosophy:

The goal of the athletic programs of the WCSU communities is to provide a healthy, positive, safe and fun sports experience for all involved.

We aim to provide equitable opportunities for children to develop and refine their skills at 3 levels, (K-2, 3-4, 5-6) as well as to provide a healthy environment emphasizing personal growth and community values.

It is recommended that each school/association hold an informational meeting at the start of each season to inform all coaches of specific rules and modifications.

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Soccer

The season (including Jamboree or tournament games) will start no earlier than the first of September and end no later than the end of October. All games will be played by H.S. Federation rules, with exceptions outlined below.

Rules

Level	Length of games	Number of Players/Field	Max. #practices week / games/season
K-2 (clinic)	N/A	N/A	N/A
3-4 (instructional)	2 - 25 minute halves	7 on 7 / smaller field	No more than 2 games/practices week. # 8 games/season, ratio of 1 practice:1 game
5-6	2- 30 minute halves	7 on 7 / smaller field	No more than 2 games/practices /week. # 10 games/season.

Saturday may be used for optional practice, out of district games, or makeups
Field size will be approx. 40x 60 yards, start times 5:30 pm Sept./5:00 Oct.

Equipment/ Uniforms:

Size 4 ball at all levels.

All players must wear shirts or jerseys of the same general color.

Mouth guards are mandatory

Shin guards covered by socks are mandatory

No jewelry

No billed hats-except for the goalkeeper

Rules Modifications:

Reduced number of players (see above)

Coaches are allowed to be on field for instructional purposes in grades K-4

No Penalty kicks-indirect kick from point of foul. On goal kicks, opposing teams must be on their own half. Heading the ball will be discouraged.

Unlimited substitutions, No slide tackles

If both coaches and officials agree, changes may be made to the above guidelines on a per game basis

No offside (grades K-4)

Teams will be single gender when possible

Home team requirements:

Medical kit at the field

Provide practice balls for opposing team

Provide referees, strongly recommended that all referees participate in referee training.

**PLEASE SEE ATTACHED SOCCER REFEREES MANUAL (APPENDIX A)
FOR MORE SPECIFIC INFORMATION ABOUT SOCCER RULES**

Basketball

The season (including jamboree and tournament play) will start after Thanksgiving break and will end no later than February vacation. The Program will follow the rules of basketball as defined by the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS), with exceptions outlined below.

Rules

Level	Length of games	Maximum #practices week / games/season
K-2	n/a. Lower baskets/women’s ball	No more than 2 practices/week.
3-4	6 minute quarters, stopped clock	No more than 3 practices and/or games per week. 10 games/season or 8 games and one (1) tournament.
5-6	6 minute quarters, stopped clock	No more than 3 practices and/or games per week. 12 games/season or 10 games and one (1) tournament.

It is best when games begin after two weeks of practice, but this will be decided annually depending on the length of the season. All games and scrimmages are included in the total allowable number of games. We encourage at least one practice between games.

Equipment/ Uniforms

All players must wear shirts or jerseys of the same general color and with unique numbers. Temporary number assignments may be made with masking tape.

Mouth guards are **mandatory** for games and practices for all players

No jewelry

Hair beyond shoulder length must be tied back with elastic or other soft material. Plastic or metal barrettes or other hard hair pieces are not allowed.

Home team requirements:

Medical kit.

Provide practice balls for opposing team

Provide referees. It is strongly recommended that all referees have participated in referee training.

Rules Modifications:

COURT & EQUIPMENT

Court Size– Nonstandard court dimensions, as available at the elementary schools, are allowed.

Side Lines– Three feet of space is required for throw-ins. On courts where there is 3 feet

of unobstructed space out-of-bounds, defenders may guard at the sideline. On courts where there is not 3 feet of unobstructed space out-of-bounds, players must allow 3 feet of inbound space. It is recommended that courts be marked with tape or paint accordingly.

Three Point Line– The 3 point rule is not in effect. Any 3 point lines will be disregarded.

Free Throw Line– Free throws for 5th and 6th graders will be attempted from the standard 15 foot line. The free throw distance for 3rd and 4th graders will be 12 feet. It is recommended that courts be marked with tape or paint accordingly.

Ball Size– An intermediate size ball will be used for all games, K-2 students will use a smaller ball, as indicated previously.

DEFENSE REGULATIONS

Zone Defense – Zone defense is defined as a player defending an area of the court rather than a player. Zone defense is not allowed for 3rd and 4th graders. Zone defense is allowed for 5th and 6th graders.

Backcourt Defense – Backcourt defense is not allowed *at any grade level*. Once a team gains possession of the ball in its backcourt, the opposite team may not interfere with ball or player movement until the ball is in the frontcourt. This includes attempting to steal the ball, intercept a pass, or blocking the ball carrier’s movement in any way. The ball is not considered in the frontcourt until the ball and both feet of the ball carrier are fully in the frontcourt – it is not permissible to meet the ball carrier at the half court line.

Stealing a Dribble- At no time is stealing of a live dribble permissible for 3rd and 4th graders. In grades 5 and 6, players may steal a live dribble.

Guarding – When playing person-to-person defense (i.e. “man-to-man”) each defensive player must attempt to remain within 6 feet of the player they are guarding.

Double Teaming- Double teaming is defined as two players guarding one player, and is not allowed. However, “Help” defense, defined as a defensive player assisting another defensive player when an offensive player is driving for a basket, is **permissible in the key area only**. Any defensive player may defend an offensive player who is attempting to put back a rebound from within the key area.

OFFENSE REGULATIONS

Fouling Out – In 5th and 6th grade, a player that commits 5 personal fouls in one game is disqualified for the remainder of the game. In 3rd and 4th grade, a player that commits 7 personal fouls in one game is disqualified for the remainder of the game

3 Seconds – An offensive player cannot remain in the key for more than 3 seconds for 5th and 6th graders. For 3rd and 4th graders, the time limit is 5 seconds.

Full Court Press - No full court press (grades K-4)

SCORING & TIMING

Timeouts- Two 1-minute timeouts per half no carry over

Scoring: At the 5-6 levels, a scorebook will be kept.

Extra Period/ Tie Game– If the score is tied at the end of the fourth quarter, the game is declared a tie. No extra period will be played.

Competitive Balance Rule – If one team is ahead by 20 points or more at the end of any quarter, one or more of the following techniques must be used by the team with the lead:

- a. Multiple-pass rule: The team with the lead must pass the ball a minimum of 5 times before attempting a shot.
- b. Non-scorer rule: Only players who have not yet scored any points in that game may attempt to make a basket.
- c. Unfamiliar position rule: Change players positions (i.e. guard vs. forward) so players who do not normally handle the ball get a chance.

The competitive balance rule will remain in effect until the difference in score becomes less than 20 points. Best practice will be for a coach to begin to implement the rule whenever it becomes apparent that one team will dominate the game, in order to preserve the integrity of players and the game. Announcements that the rule is in effect need not be made to the public.

PLEASE ALSO NOTE GENERAL EXPECTATIONS, WHICH APPLY TO ALL ORGANIZED ATHLETICS EXPERIENCES. (see page 8)

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

These expectations apply to all recreation opportunities sponsored by the school.

Expectations for Players

- Play for fun
- Work to improve your skills
- Practice teamwork, sportsmanship
- Be on time for practices and games
- Respect your teammates, coach, parents, opponents and officials
- Never argue a call
- Respect others' property

Expectations for Coaches

- ◆ Sports is about fun, good sportsmanship, developing skills, and learning about being part of team and making a contribution. *Sportsmanship is our goal!*
- ◆ Emphasize skill development, positive play, and sportsmanship. Make it positive. Winning is not the only consideration. Provide a safe environment in which your players can develop their skills.
- ◆ Teams should be put together so that they are as equal as possible in terms of kids' playing level. We do not condone A and B teams.
- ◆ Every player participates and playing time should be equitable. However, coaches may consider attendance at practices in making decisions regarding play time.
- ◆ We do not condone running up the score, if the score becomes largely lopsided, coaches please should implement the competitive balance rule or come up with an agreeable solution when that is not enough.
- ◆ Be a role model.
- ◆ Be consistent and fair.
- ◆ An updated rule book will be provided to coach and referees at the beginning of the season (see the athletic director at the school, WCSU elementary athletic coordinator, or the school principal).

Expectations of Spectators

- Make it fun.
- Be supportive
- Teach by example
- Applaud effort, cheer positively
- Make sure your child is on time to games and practices
- Be positive and respectful
- Address issues promptly with the coach
- No smoking on school grounds.

The member schools and organizations of the WCSU Recreation Council have agreed that there should be an expectation of positive support from fans at all sporting events. Cheering in a positive fashion, for both sides is encouraged. Our goal is a positive experience for all involved. All officials and coaches are volunteers we should appreciate their efforts and support them, setting a good example for the children.

Unsportsmanlike or inappropriate spectator behavior can not be tolerated in this environment. This includes but is not limited to: booing, shouting at officials, coaches, players, or arguing calls. Expressing any negative behavior or comments, threats, or obscene gestures to players, coaches or officials is unacceptable. Coaching or refereeing from the sidelines should not occur.

Any person who does not behave appropriately will be asked to leave according to the following steps:

1. Officials will identify violator to the coaches or vice versa
2. Officials will confer with both coaches, one of whom will then approach the spectator and give a warning. If an incident occurs again, they will be asked to leave.
3. Play will not resume until he/she has left the facility. If they refuse, the game will be over.

Please help us foster good sportsmanship, and encourage positive experiences.

Cancellation of an Activity

In the case of inclement weather or other school emergency, we look to cancel activities that are immediately after school before 1pm, so that notice can get to everyone. If an evening activity, such as a game, is to be cancelled, a decision needs to be made by 2 pm, again so that everyone can be contacted.

The process for cancellation is that the decision will be made by the coaches, who will then notify the school. If the school administration feels that a cancellation should occur, he/she will notify the appropriate head coach. Coaches are responsible for notifying other teams involved, as well as families of all students. *It is strongly recommended that a phone tree as well as alternative plans be established at the start of a season/trimester.*

Procedure for cancellation of after-school activity:

- 1) Make a decision by 1 pm.
- 2) Contact the school main office to inform them of the decision. They will notify U32 and the other elementary schools. The school will notify the students that the practice has been cancelled. However, the coach is responsible for notifying all families.
- 3) Update the sports phone lines (or other appropriate lines) at school so that correct information is there.
- 4) Begin a phone chain to notify all students' families. Unless we have notice otherwise from a family, students will be sent home on the bus (following their usual after school plans for that day of the week.)

Procedure for cancellation of evening activity:

- 1) Make a decision by 2:00 pm.
- 2) Contact the school main office to inform them of the decision. They will notify U32 and the other elementary schools. In addition, they will send notice out to all students.
- 3) Update the sports phone lines (or other appropriate lines) at school so that correct information is there
- 4) Begin a phone chain to notify all students' families. Unless we have notice otherwise from a family, students will be sent home on the bus (following their usual after school plans for that day of the week.)

SAMPLE LETTER TO BE SENT HOME AT THE START OF EACH SEASON.

Welcome Parents:

At _____ we are committed to the principles of positive coaching which shares a desire to win with the more important goals of teaching skills and having fun. Here's how you can help achieve that goal. Please sign this letter to indicate that you have read it and are willing to work with us to make this a terrific season!

- Remember that your child is a winner even if the team doesn't win the game. Winners work to master the game through maximum effort, continuing to learn and improve and not letting mistakes stop them.
- Your #1 job is to fill your child's emotional tank with encouragement, regardless of what happens in the game.
- Our coaches have been trained to follow a positive coaching model; please do not coach from the sidelines as it confuses the message.
- Honor the game and the official's decisions; cheer for all students because good sportsmanship is part of the lesson.
- Students should attend all practices and games. Please talk to the coach if you have transportation issues.
- Every student will be allowed to use his/her skills by participating equally in the game. Please be on time, with the required equipment, to help make this possible.
- Please enjoy the season, have fun, and encourage those around you to do the same!

Parent/Guardian Signature

Parent/Guardian Name

* Please return to your child's coach before the first game of the season.

Tips
and
Definitions of Rules and Terms
for
Referees and Coaches
of
WCSU Soccer and Basketball

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WCSU athletic programs, K-6 soccer and basketball, play under the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) rules with specific modifications as outlined below and in the WCSU athletic manual (wcsuonline.org). NFHS Rule Books are available, but can be daunting, especially for inexperienced coaches and referees, and are for the most part unnecessary for this level of play.

In an effort to demystify soccer and basketball at the K-6 level, and to encourage and empower more volunteer coaches and referees, I have attempted to define rules and terms for each sport in a simple manner. I have put the definitions in alphabetical order for ease of reference.

I have included a “Putting It All Together” general advise and encouragement section for Referees and a “Game Time” run through for each sport. “The Worst Case Scenarios” section at the end applies to both soccer and basketball.

The definitions of rules and terms included in this manual are based on the NFHS rule handbook, extensive online research, and several local referee and coaches’ clinics. The tips and advise are based on my almost 14 years of experience being an elementary level referee and coach in Central Vermont.

Soccer:

WCSU Rule Modifications:

- * 7v7 Small sided games (7 players includes the goalie)
- * 2 / 25 minute (running time) halves for 3-4
- * 2 /30 minute (running time) halves for 5-6
- * Coaches allowed on the field during stopped play for instruction (3-4)
- * No penalty kicks: indirect kick from point of foul. Outside the penalty box.
- * Unlimited Substitutions
- * If coaches agree, changes can be made on a per game basis
- * No offside at the 3-4 level
- * No slide tackles
- * During a goal kick, opposing team must stand at the half line until the ball is kicked
- * Competitive Balance Rule (see definition below)

Definitions of Rules and Terms:

Advantage Clause: if a violation occurs and it does not affect the advantage of the team that the violation occurred against, it is the referee's prerogative to not stop the play for a free-kick. In other words: if a defender kicks a player who has an obvious scoring opportunity and the player is able to play on it is not to the advantage of the violated team to have a free-kick called.

* Make sure to call "PLAY ON" so that everyone knows you saw the violation but chose not to call it.

* Obviously at the 3-6 level, if anyone is knocked down or hurt it is best to call the foul.

Competitive Balance Rule:

If at any time during the game one team is ahead of the other by 5 goals, the competitive balance rule will go into effect.

Goals will only count under one of the following two conditions

- * Shot taken by previously non-scoring player
- * Shot taken after 3 consecutive passes

Corner Kick:

If the ball goes over the end line (also known as the goal line) and is last touched by the defending team (the team defending that goal), the attacking team inbounds from the nearest corner arc.

- * The ball can be placed anywhere on the corner arc lines.
- * Defenders need to stand at least 10 yards away from the kicker.
- * Goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.
- * Kicker may not play the ball again until it is touched by another player on either team.

Fouls:

The following six violations result in a direct free-kick for the opposing team. Technically these are not fouls if they are done accidentally, but I call them if there is

contact at the 3-6 level. The NFHS handbook says the referee should call a foul if in their judgment the player was “careless, reckless, or using excessive force”.

- 1) kicking or attempting to kick opponent
- 2) tripping or attempting to trip
- 3) charging into an opponent
- 4) striking or attempting to strike
- 5) pushing an opponent
- 6) jumping at an opponent (even if it is a careless header attempt)

Given the WCSU emphasis on sportsmanship: any player who commits any of these or the following violations deliberately or maliciously, should be cautioned (make sure their coach is also aware of the warning) and if they don't heed the caution should be sent off the field.

The following fouls always result in a direct free-kick for the opposing team:

- 7) blatant holding, pulling, or sandwiching
- 8) making contact before touching the ball
- 9) spitting- even if it misses
- 10) hand ball (Modifications: this is an indirect kick if in the penalty box)

Goal:

*In order for a goal to be scored, the ball must completely cross the end line inside the goal.

*It is a goal even if the goalie catches it over the end line or has the ball in his/her hands when it crosses the end line.

Goal Box: or Goalie Box.

*This is the smaller of the two boxes around the goal.

*The goal box is contained within the penalty box and is considered to be part of the penalty area.

*Some schools in our district only have one box. This should be considered the penalty box.

Goal Kicks:

If the ball goes completely over the end line and was last touched by the attacking team the ball is put back into play by a goal kick by the defending team.

*The ball should be placed anywhere inside the goal box including the line.

*In our district, the opposing team must stand at the half line until the ball is kicked.

*The kick needs to clear the penalty box or be taken over.

*The kick can be taken by any player on the team including the goalie.

Hand Ball:

A hand ball is called if any player (including the goalie if he is out of the penalty area) handles the ball **deliberately** with his/her hands.

*Not if a player is instinctively protecting themselves

*Not if ball hits and hands were down

*It is the Ref's prerogative to call “Play On” if a hand ball does not affect possession

Headers:

Heading the ball is legal, but should be discouraged (by coaches) at the 3-6 level. Medical studies have shown that repeated heading leads to brain damage even in cases where players do not seem visibly affected.

***Any player who takes a ball to the head at close range or with excessive force should be observed by the Referee.** Make sure the player can focus their eyes even if they say they are fine. The old “How many fingers am I holding up?” question may seem silly, but it is a tried and true method of testing focus. I know, from experience, that it is used regularly by even high level neurosurgeons.

*It is at the Ref’s discretion to sub out a player temporarily, even over the protests of players and/or coaches.

Indirect Kick Fouls:

--An indirect kick means that the ball must touch one other player (including opposing players/goalie) before it crosses the goal line.

--If the ball is being “tapped” by one player before it is kicked by another (same team) it does **not** need to move.

The following violations result in an indirect kick for the opposing team:

- 1) Dangerous Play: In the referee’s judgment if a player
 - a. endangers another player by high kicking when someone is close
 - b. endangers themselves and others by kicking when already on the ground
 - c. endangers themselves by heading too low when an opponent is kicking near them
 - d. anything that endangers the goalkeeper (goal keeper is in possession with only one finger on the ball and cannot be played against at that point).
- 2) Obstruction: Impeding the progress of a player not in playing distance of the ball. Players can screen if they are within playing distance of the ball.
- 3) Interfering with the goalkeeper putting the ball into play. This is also unsporting behavior and should result in a verbal warning as well as an indirect free-kick.
- 4) A Referee can also chose to give an indirect kick for unsporting behavior of any kind: dissent, threatening or offensive language.

*At the 3-6 level these behaviors should also result in warning/ejection at the Referee’s discretion.

Indirect Kicks Pertaining to Goalkeeper:

- 1) Delay of game (rules say 6 seconds to release, but the ref should use his/her judgment)
- 2) Touching with hands when deliberately kicked to the goal keeper by own team.

* The goalie is only allowed to play the ball with his/her feet if deliberately kicked back by his/her own player. If the player heads, chests, or knees the ball back, or if the ball bounces off their own player accidentally, the goalie can use his/her hands.
- 3) Intentionally touching the ball after released from hands to ground and not touched by another player.

Kick-Off:

At the beginning of the game, at the half, and after every goal there is a kick-off.

- * Game start can be decided by coin toss
- * Team that did not start gets the kick-off after the half
- * After every goal, the team that was scored against gets a kick-off

Ball is placed on the line in the center of the center circle. The ball must be kicked forward one revolution before it is touched by another player. A player cannot kick-off to themselves.

Offside Rule (Simple):

A player is **not** Offside if:

- * Player is the ball handler (has possession of the ball)
- * Is in his/her own half of the field (half with goal s/he is defending)
- * Is even with or behind the ball
- * Doesn't pass last defender (last before the goalie)
- * Receives the ball directly from a goal kick, corner kick, or throw in
- * Does not pose a threat of any kind
- * In an offside position but plays the ball back

Offside Rule (Detailed):

* Offside is called from the moment the ball was played

* "Actively play or pose a threat" is at the Referee's discretion. A player can pose a threat even if s/he does not play the ball if, in the referee's judgment, the player distracted the goalie.

Penalty Box:

- * The penalty Box is the Bigger box.
- * Sometimes called the Eighteen or the Penalty Area.
- * The penalty box contains the goalie box.

Running Time:

This simply means that once the clock has been started it is not stopped until the end of the half or end of the game.

There are only three reasons to stop the clock early and all three mean the end of the game:

- 1) lightning has been seen (or other weather which is severe enough in the Ref's judgment to pose danger to the players)
- 2) it is too dark outside for play to continue safely (later in the season some teams in our district start games earlier to avoid this possibility)
- 3) a player is seriously injured

Shoulder Charge : or Fair Charging

- *Must be within playing distance of the ball
- *Cannot be violent or dangerous
- *Must be intended to win the ball not knock down player
- *Shoulder to shoulder, elbows close to body

Side Lines: also called Touch Lines are the lines on the long side of the field.

- * All field lines are part of the area they define.
- *Any part of the ball on the line means it's in.
- *The ball must completely cross the line to be out.

Substitutions:

- *Both teams' benches are to be on the same side of the field
- * 3 / 4 level: strongly suggested that players enter for substitution from the halfway line
- * 5 / 6 level: players are required to enter for substitution from the halfway line

The WCSU allows "unlimited substitutions." This means that there can be as many substitutions in a game as the coach wants but **only** at specific times.

- 1) after a goal kick is called for either team
- 2) after a goal is scored by either team
- 3) at half-time
- 4) after a whistle is blown for an injury
- 5) after a throw-in or a corner kick is called for your own team
- 6) on a throw-in or corner kick if the team with possession makes substitutions (the other team can also)

Technically players are supposed to leave the field before substitutes can enter the field. This would be very time consuming, especially at the 3 / 4 level. I don't enforce this rule but I often tell players to "Hurry Off". (Remember the clock is running).

Throw-In:

When the ball goes out of bounds over the side line (or touch line) it is out on the last team that touched it. The opposing team takes a throw in.

Legal throw-in:

- a. behind and over head
- b. using both hands
- c. both feet on ground until release
- d. feet do not cross line (a player may step on the line. Considered to cross the line only if one or both feet are entirely over the line)

*There is no offside on a throw-in

*3-4 One do-over for illegal throw-in (especially watch the players back foot stays on the ground) and then awarded to other team

*5-6 Illegal throw-in results in throw-in being awarded to the other team

Game Time--Soccer:

Arrive at least 15 minutes early

Even after all these years I find myself very nervous before refereeing a soccer game. Once I step out on the field with my whistle around my neck I am in “Ref Mode” and much of my nervousness dissipates.

Shake hands with the coaches

Even if you know them. Even if you wouldn't normally shake hands on greeting them under different circumstances. This is part of “Ref Mode” for me. A good firm hand shake shows your confidence.

Tell each coach: “I need you to remind your players to take off all jewelry and make sure they have mouthguards and shin guards in place.”

This is a quick reminder. Everyone knows the rules already.

*It is the refs responsibility to do his/her utmost to prevent injury.

***Mouthguards are mandatory!** Mouthguards not only protect the teeth but lessen the impact on the brain in the event of a collision or ball to the head.

*Shin guards covered by socks are also mandatory.

***A player who does not have a mouthguard or shinguards cannot play.** No exceptions! Even if the player cries and begs. Even if the coach cries and begs.

*If at any time during play you notice that a player does not have a mouth guard, blow the whistle. (You may chose to wait if the player is not in the action and the other team has a scoring opportunity). Send the player off the field and award a direct free-kick to the other team. It should be considered an intentional foul.

“Coach I need captains for a coin toss”

Youth teams don't generally have set captains but players are happy to take on the role for one game. Let the coach pick.

Meet with the “captains” in the center circle. Have them shake hands. it's a nice gesture that sets the tone for friendly competition.

Do a coin toss:

Try to remember to bring a coin. I often forget and just ask someone to borrow one.

*Let visiting team call heads or tails while in the air

* If they call the coin correctly they get to choose either 1) To defend a certain goal or 2) To take the kick-off

* Clarify the outcome: ie: “Blue will take the kick-off. White is defending this (point) goal.”

Make sure the game ball is decent (not too soft) and place it on the center point of the center circle.

“Two minutes till game time coaches”

Address the Spectators:

This is not the easiest thing to do on a soccer field because generally spectators aren't sitting all together. Run over to the biggest group and yell something like "Good Afternoon!" Wait only a few seconds if it seems like people are coming over. You'll need to talk loud enough for everyone to hear you. Keep it short and to the point. This is what I say:

For 3 /4:

Hi! My name is Ceylan Cross. I'm your Referee today. Blue has chosen to take the kick-off and white will be defending the far goal. We will be playing 2 / 20 minute halves, running time, with a five minute half time. Please remember that there is no offside call at the 3 /4 level. Players will be given one do-over for an illegal thrown-in before it is awarded to the other team. Please remember that spectators are not allowed to stand behind the end lines. Please let me make the calls. I will not see everything but I will do my best. Please do not yell at me. (Yes, I actually say this). Rules and rule modifications for our league can be found online on the WCSU website. Does anyone have any questions before we start? (It's rare that anyone asks one). Thank you.

For 5/6 make the following changes:

- *We will be playing 2 /25 minute halves, running time, with a 5 minute half time
- * Offside will only be called if, in the Referee's judgment, the player poses a threat
- * If there is an illegal throw-in the ball will be turned over to the other team.

Then jog back to the center circle. The teams should be on the field by now.

I always ask each goalie if s/he is ready. I feels like it draws everyone's attention to the fact that the game is about to begin. When everyone is in position, including my position by the center circle, I yell: "Blue goalie are you ready?" I raise my hand and s/he raises their hand in answer. "White goalie are you ready?" I raise my hand again and the other goalie raises his/her hand in answer.

Keeping Time:

It is the referee's job to keep the time. When I first started refereeing I found that task very daunting. If you don't feel comfortable keeping time find a reliable/impartial time keeper.

Kick- Off:

Players line up on their own sides of the field. Only the two people doing the kick off are in the center circle.

If the ball does not go one revolution forward on the first kick blow the whistle. Say loudly: "The ball needs to go one revolution forward" and give them another try.

Blow the whistle harder than you think is necessary when you make a call. Everyone needs to hear it. Make your calls as loud as possible. The players and coaches need to know what's going on.

Call what you see. You're not going to see everything. It's better to miss a call than to call something wrong. And never make a call or change a call based on what coaches or spectators yell at you.

Hand and Whistle Signals :

I have to admit that I don't use the official hand or whistle signals. Learning them has been on my "To Do" list for many years. If you have the time and the inclination learning the official signals, though not necessary for this level of play, is a good idea. They can be found in the NFHS handbook and in some on-line sites.

*I always point in the direction the ball is to go. (Especially at the 3 /4 level players can be confused about the direction of play).

*I do put both arms straight up and blow a long whistle to indicate a goal

*I blow four short quick whistles to indicate the half and the end of the game

Side Lines:

*If you are the only Ref, which is more often than not the case at this level of play, it will be very hard to call both side lines. Coaches are usually reliable to call the line the team benches are on

*If you like you can enlist a parent or spectator to run one of the sidelines for you. All they need to do is raise their hand when the ball goes completely over the line and point in the direction of the throw in (based on which team was last to touch the ball). This is how I started refereeing. And when I first started being the center ref I always asked someone to run the line for me.

* There is so much going on on a soccer field and so many bodies in the way you will not always see who the ball went out on. Young players are often reliable when you ask them who it went out on.

Substitutions:

*Coaches will yell for subs usually at the appropriate times. (See substitutions in definitions).

*I raise my hand and yell: "Substitution" to hold play and to get all the players to pay attention to see if they are being called off the field. When all the switches have been made blow the whistle to indicate start of play.

* There will be a lot of substitutions. This is the nature of youth sports. Everyone needs to play and some players get tired easily. Also most young players aren't great at sitting out for very long.

*Remember that it is suggested at 3 /4 and required at 5 /6 that players sub in from the halfway line.

* I often tell players to "Hurry Off". Some players are tired and they take their time. Remember the clock is running.

*If there are several substitutions made at once I do a quick player count. You'll be surprised at how often teams have the wrong number of players on the field.

Always Protect the Goal Keeper:

*Goal keepers are especially vulnerable and should be protected. The goalie is in possession of the ball once s/he has at least one finger on it. Other players cannot play the ball at this point.

*Charging the goalie or interfering with the goalie putting the ball into play is a violation. It should also be considered to be unsporting behavior

At the end of the game:

*Line up with the home team and shake hands with the visiting players and coaches.

Basketball:

Home team requirements:

- *Score Board Operator
- *Pre-game message regarding expectations of sportsmanship & safety
- *Medical kit-including a copy of the athletic manual and incident report forms
- *Clean floor with accessibility to mop and towels for drying floors
- *Provide practice balls for opposing team
- *Provide referees.

Important Rules and General Modifications:

Basketball rules are meant to discourage overly aggressive play. The game is meant to be competitive and fun, not violent. Fouls are called when officials feel that physical contact between two players caused one team to gain an advantage because of that contact. Safety and fair play are the top priorities!

Mouthguards are mandatory for all players during all practices and games!

Mouthguards not only protect the teeth but lessen the impact on the brain in the event of a collision, fall, or any jolt to the head.

*All players must wear comfortably loose, appropriate shorts and shirts or jerseys of the same general color and with unique numbers. Temporary number assignments may be made with masking tape.

*NO jewelry (NO covering earrings with tape, must be removed)

*NO metal, or hard plastics- including but not excluded to athletic braces & hair fastens

*Hair beyond shoulder length must be tied back with elastic or other soft material.

Ball Size– An intermediate size ball will be used for all games

Backcourt Defense – Backcourt defense is not allowed for 3rd and 4th graders. Once a team gains possession of the ball in its backcourt, the opposite team may not interfere with ball or player movement until the ball is in the frontcourt. This includes attempting to steal the ball, intercept a pass, or blocking the ball carrier's movement in any way. The ball is not considered in the frontcourt until the ball and both feet of the ball carrier are fully in the frontcourt – it is not permissible to meet the ball carrier at the half court line.

Backcourt defense may be taught and used in preparation for higher levels of play in grades 5 and 6, but must be applied with respect to the Competitive Balance rule, so one team cannot dominate another through the application of a backcourt defense.

Competitive Balance Rule (See Definition Below)

Court Size– Nonstandard court dimensions, as available at the elementary schools, are allowed.

Double Teaming - Double teaming is not allowed.

* “Help” defense when an offensive player is driving for a basket, is permissible in the key area only.

*Any defensive player may defend an offensive player who is attempting to put back a rebound from within the key area.

Extra Period/ Tie Game– If the score is tied at the end of the fourth quarter, the game is declared a tie. No extra period will be played.

Length of Season: The basketball season (including jamboree and tournament play) will start after Thanksgiving break and will end no later than the start of February vacation.

Side Lines– Three feet of space is required for throw-ins.

*On courts where there is 3 feet of unobstructed space out-of-bounds, defenders may guard at the sideline.

*On courts where there is not 3 feet of unobstructed space out-of-bounds, players must allow 3 feet of inbound space. It is recommended that courts be marked with tape or paint accordingly.

Teams Start games opposite end of the court from their bench

Ten seconds in the backcourt: Offensive team has 10 seconds to move into the front court. Violation of this rule results in turnover.

Three Point Line– The 3 point rule is not in effect. Any 3 point lines will be disregarded.

Timeouts- Two 1-minute timeouts per half, no carry over.

Level Specific Rules Modifications:

K-2 :

*No more than 2 practices/week.

*Lower baskets

3-4:

*6 minute quarters, stopped clock

*No more than 3 practices/games per week. 10 games/season.

*Foul shots taken from 12 foot mark (line should be marked with tape)

- *Zone Defense is not allowed
- * No player may steal an active dribble.
- * Player that commits 7 personal fouls is disqualified for the remainder of the game
- *Offensive player cannot remain in the key area for more than 5 seconds

5-6:

- *6 minute quarters, stopped clock
- *No more than 3 practices/games per week. 12 games/season.
- *Player that commits 5 personal fouls is disqualified for the remainder of the game
- *An offensive player cannot remain in the key area for more than 3 seconds
- *Scorebook will be kept

Definitions of Rules and Terms:

alive:

a ball is alive when it is released by a shooter or thrower, or legally tapped by a jumper during a jump ball; the game clock starts only when the ball becomes alive; compare with live.

alternating-possession rule:

the possession arrow changes direction after each subsequent jump ball situation, alternating which team gets possession for the throw-in.

backcourt:

the area from the mid-court line to the end line furthest from the offense's basket.

*The mid-line is part of the space it contains

*A team cannot be in possession of the ball for more than 10 seconds in their own backcourt. Ref starts count from when throw-in is received. If violation occurs a throw-in is awarded to the opposing team at the place where violation occurred.

*Once in front court stepping on or over the mid-court line is a backcourt violation

*Once in front court ball on or over the mid-court line is a backcourt violation

*A player can not be first to touch the ball in backcourt after team has been in control in front court if s/he or teammate was last to touch in front court (in other words: its okay to retrieve the ball if it is knocked back by someone on the other team).

backcourt defense:

- * Backcourt defense is not allowed in grades 3 and 4
- *Once a team gains possession of the ball in its backcourt, the opposing team may not interfere with ball or player movement until the ball is in the frontcourt.
- *This includes attempting to steal the ball, intercept a pass, or blocking the ball carrier's movement in any way.
- *The ball is not considered in the frontcourt until the ball and both feet of the ball carrier are fully in the frontcourt
- *It is not permissible to meet the ball carrier at the half court line. Referee can tell defending players to back up and give ball carrier a chance to get both feet over the line

bank shot:

a shot where the ball is first bounced (or banked) off the backboard at such an angle that it then drops into the basket.

baseline: (or end line):

the boundary line behind each basket

bench fouls:

- *Bench fouls are fouls committed by coach(es) or players on the bench
- *Bench fouls are given to the head coach

The following are team bench technical fouls:

- Taunting
- Inciting the crowd
- Profanity
- Disrespect to the Ref

- *If a coach receives a technical foul the "seat belt law" goes into effect: Coach is not allowed to stand for the remainder of the game.
- *Two technical fouls disqualify the coach from the game

blocking:

the use of a defender's body position to illegally prevent an opponent's advance with or without the ball; the opposite of charging.

- *If an offensive player has head and shoulders past and is bumped by defender blocking foul is called against defender
- *Ref signals by bouncing fists off both hips

boxing out:

a player's attempt to position his body between his opponents and the basket to get rebounds and prevent the opponents from doing so.

carry:

*Technically anytime a dribblers hand is "below the horizon" it is considered to be a carry

*A player can dribble as high as s/he wants as long as hand is on top of ball

center circle:

the circular area at mid-court from which jump balls are taken.

charging:

an offensive foul which occurs when an offensive player makes contact with the chest/torso of a defender who has established position (by having two feet firmly planted on the floor).

Competitive Balance Rule – If one team is ahead by 20 points or more at the end of any quarter, one or more of the following techniques must be used by the team with the lead:

a. **Multiple-pass rule:** The team with the lead must pass the ball a minimum of 5 times before attempting a shot.

b. **Non-scorer rule:** Only players who have not yet scored any points in that game may attempt to make a basket.

c. **Unfamiliar position rule:** Change players positions (i.e. guard vs. forward) so players who do not normally handle the ball get a chance.

*The competitive balance rule will remain in effect until the difference in score becomes less than 20 points.

*It is expected that coaches will put this into effect without instruction from the referee

*The referee will inform spectators of this rule in the welcoming statement to avoid drawing attention to it (and the team that is behind in points) at the time the rule is put into effect

dead ball:

any ball that is not live; occurs after each successful field goal or free-throw attempt, after any official's whistle/hand signal or if the ball leaves the court; it stops play which is then resumed by an inbound throw or free-throw.

double dribble:

*Once a player has dribbled the ball s/he cannot stop and then dribble again

*Must pass after two hands on ball at same time

*During a dribble the ball may be batted into the air as long as it is allowed to hit the floor before it is touched again with the hand

double team:

when two teammates join efforts in guarding a single opponent.

*Double teaming is not allowed outside the key area.

elbowing:

it is a violation if a player vigorously or excessively swings his/her elbows, even if there is no contact

*Referee will blow the whistle and award ball to the opposing team

*It is a foul if contact is made

*It is an automatic ejection (at the Referee's discretion) if that contact is intense and is above shoulder level.

field goal:

when the ball enters the basket from above during play; worth 2 points

flagrant (or intentional) foul:

Unnecessary, excessive, and/or intentional contact against an opponent.

*Ref signals by making X out of wrists over head

*Ref awards same as technical foul: 2 shots with all players back at half-court

*After shots opposing team inbounds the ball at spot where foul occurred

* 1 flagrant (or intentional) personal or technical foul may disqualify player to the bench!

floor violation:

a player's action that violates the rules but does not prevent an opponent's movement or cause him harm

*penalized by a change in possession.

foul:

actions by players which break the rules but are not floor violations

*Ref indicates by putting closed fist up in the air

*Ref should report the foul by calling out (loud and clear): Team, Number, Call

*penalized by a change in possession or free-throw opportunities

*see personal foul or technical foul.

The following are common fouls:

Blocking

Charging into Chest and Torso

Holding
Tripping
Illegal screen
Reaching in or around the body or over from behind and having any contact

Basic Guidelines Used to Determine Which Player Committed a Foul:

- * First player to establish position (or get set in a position) has the right to that position
- *When a player moves into the path of an opposing player and contact is made, that player is responsible for the contact.
- *Player cannot extend an arm or leg into an opponents pathway and cause contact. (As a Ref I would warn a player about this even if no contact made)

foul lane:

the area bordered by the end line and the foul line, outside which players must stand during a free-throw; also the area an offensive player cannot spend more than 3-seconds at a time in (5 seconds for 3-4).

- *This area is sometimes painted

foul line (or free throw line):

the line 15' from the backboard and parallel to the end line from which players shoot free-throws.

- *It is 12 feet for 3-4.

free-throw or foul shot:

an unguarded shot taken from the foul line by a player whose opponent committed a personal or technical foul; it is worth 1 point.

- * At 7 team fouls (cleared at the half) the opposing team is awarded a free-throw (or foul shot); 1 and 1. This means the player takes one shot and if that one goes in s/he gets to take another one.
- * At 10 team fouls (cleared at the half) leads to 2 free throws or foul shots for a foul.
- * Shooting fouls are always 2 free throws. If there is a shooting foul but the basket is good: then only 1 foul shot.
- *Opposing team is in bottom blocks (closest to the basket) for free throw. Players line up in alternating order. One player is behind the arc of the key
- *Shooter has 10 seconds from the time the ref gives him/her the ball to shoot
- * Ball has to hit the rim before anyone steps in including the shooter.
- *If anyone enters lane too soon it is a lane violation:
Offensive violation: results in turnover.
Defensive violation: opposing team gets another free throw attempt
- *If the ball doesn't hit the rim it is a violation and the ball is given to the opposing team at the baseline. (Hitting the backboard is still missing the rim).
- *If player has been awarded 2 shots, the first shot can miss the rim.

*Free throws (or foul shots) are not awarded for offensive fouls

free-throw line extended:

an imaginary line drawn from the free-throw line to the sideline to determine the location for certain inbound throws.

frontcourt:

the area between the mid-court line and the end line closest to the offense's basket.

* Player must have both feet over the line to be considered to be in front court

*Team has 10 seconds to bring ball into front court after inbounds from baseline after basket

high post:

an imaginary area outside either side of the foul lane at the free-throw line extended.

holding: any contact that restricts or interferes with an offensive player's movement

*Ref signals by holding own wrist

*Results in turn-over or foul shots

inbounds area:

the area within the end lines and sidelines of the court

*Bottom and sides (including top) of backboard are considered inbounds as long as the ball doesn't touch any wires or supports

*If the ball goes over the basket it is out of bounds

inbound pass :

See throw-in

incidental contact:

minor contact which does not affect advantage usually overlooked by officials.

jump ball(also called held ball):

* restart play based on alternating possession arrow when both opposing players have hold of the ball at the same time

*also called when a well-blocked shot (no contact between players) doesn't leave the hands of the shooter

*Ref signals by pointing two thumbs up above head

*team with possession is awarded throw-in

*** Also see "tip-off" for definitions of the jump ball that starts the game!***

key or keyhole:

the area at each end of the court consisting of the foul circle, foul lane and free-throw line

lay-up:

a shot taken after driving to the basket by leaping up under the basket and using one hand to bank the ball off the backboard into it

live ball:

as soon as a ball is given to a free-throw shooter or a thrower on a throw-in, it is live, but the game clock does not restart until the ball is alive.

loose ball:

a ball that is alive but not in the possession of either team.

low post:

an imaginary area outside either side of the lane close to the basket.

person-to-person (or man-to-man) defense:

the defensive style where each defensive player is responsible for guarding one opponent.

*each defensive player must attempt to remain within 6 feet of the player they are guarding.

offensive fouls:

*Offensive player cannot charge into the chest and torso of a defender who has both feet firmly planted on the floor (is not moving)

*Penalized by change in possession

*Non-shooting

open:

when a player is unguarded by a defender.

out of bounds:

the area outside of and including the end lines and sidelines.

*Ball is considered to be in-bounds as long as it is in the air or touching something that is inbounds

*Stepping on the line is out-of-bounds

*Bouncing the ball on the line is out-of-bounds

*Supports and back of the backboard are out of bounds

*Ceiling and overhead equipment are out of bounds

*Possession is based on last player to touch ball inbounds (awarded to opposite team)

*If opposing players are last to touch the ball simultaneously or if referee is unsure which team was last to touch the ball, throw-in shall be awarded based on alternating-possession arrow

period:

any quarter or half

personal foul:

contact between players that may result in injury or provide one team with an unfair advantage

*Players may not push, hold, trip, hack, elbow, restrain or charge into an opponent; these are also counted as team fouls.

possession:

to be holding or in control of the ball.

*Start of game (first quarter) is determined by jump ball. First non-jumper to catch the ball becomes the team in possession

*Second quarter: opposite team throws-in at half court across from table

*Third quarter: according to possession arrow, throw-in at half court across from table

*Fourth quarter: same as third quarter

possession arrow:

used to determine which team's turn it is to throw-in (or in-bound) the ball to begin a period or in a jump ball situation.

*Half time: make sure to switch arrow for basket change.

rebound:

when a player grabs a ball that is coming off the rim or backboard after a shot attempt

release:

the moment that the ball leaves a shooter's hands.

screen or screener:

the offensive player who stands between a teammate and a defender to give his teammate the chance to take an open shot.

*Screener is not allowed to move his/her feet once s/he has established position

*Screener is not allowed to bump into defender

sidelines:

2 boundary lines that run the length of the court.

squaring up:

when a player's shoulders are facing the basket as he releases the ball for a shot; considered good shooting position.

substitutions:

- *Substitutions can be made by either team during any dead ball
- *A player who has been awarded foul shots must take them before leaving the floor

team fouls:

each personal foul committed by a player is also counted against his team; when a team goes over the limit, its opponent is awarded free-throw opportunities.

technical fouls:

procedural violations and misconduct that officials believe are detrimental to the game; penalized by 2 free-throws and possession to the non-offending team.

- *Includes sending a player on the court in violation of equipment rules
(ie: not wearing a mouth guard)
- * Free-throws taken by player of coach's choice
- *Everyone else at the half court line
- *Same team inbounds at half court opposite the table.
- *2 technical fouls on any individual player or coach results in ejection from the game.

throw-in:

the method by which a team with possession inbounds the ball.

- * Ball goes in where foul is **not** where ball is
- *First pass inbounds can always go backcourt
- *Player has a 3 foot box from where s/he is handed the ball (also can back up)
- *Player has 5 seconds to inbound from time ref hands him/her the ball
- *Player should stand between referee and basket and be handed the ball (I would not recommend the Ref bounce it to players at this level except for free throws).
- *If 5 seconds violation other team gets ball at same place
- *After basket or free throw can inbound anywhere on the end line
- *Player must step right on floor after throw-in
- *Player cannot throw-in to self
- *Teammates cannot occupy adjacent positions within 3 feet of the boundary line if an opponent desires one of the positions

timeout:

when play is temporarily suspended by an official or at the request of a team to respond to an injured player or discuss strategy

*2 1-minute time-outs per half with no carry over called by player or head coach in possession.

*During an inbound when the Ref has the ball there is no possession and anyone can call a time-out

*Ref should report to desk: Team color/"Time-Out"/Coach/60 seconds

*Ball is thrown-in where ball was

*Ref can (and should) call a time-out for shoe tying

tip-off:

the initial jump ball that starts the game.

*2 opposing players jump for a ball an official tosses above and between them, to tap it to their teammates and gain possession

*2 opposing jumpers in inner circle

*All other players are outside and around the larger circle (not all our courts have this circle).

*Two players on the same team cannot line up adjacent to each other if an opposing player desires one of the positions

*Players cannot step on line or enter circle until ball is tapped

*Ref should blow the whistle, step in and throw ball up high enough to make players jump

*Jumper cannot touch ball more than twice

*Jumper cannot tap ball to him/herself

*Jumper cannot catch the ball

traveling:

a floor violation when the ball handler takes too many steps without dribbling.

*Only hand or ball can touch court during legal dribble

*If a player falls: s/he has to dribble to get up/pass/shoot/or time-out.

*If a player slides on stomach or back: Turning over is travel.

Sitting up is travel

*Once a player stops dribbling s/he cannot move (pick up or slide) or change pivot foot

*Player cannot pass to him/herself

*Ball can be tapped into the air but must be allowed to strike the court before it is touched with the hands

turnover:

when the offense loses possession through its own fault, by passing the ball out of bounds or committing a floor violation.

verticality:

Refers to a legal guarding position (often in a shooting situation)

*Defender's hands and arms must be straight up above his/her own head (within his/her own vertical plane)

*Defender cannot use lower part of body to cause contact outside of this vertical plane

*Offensive player may not cause contact within the defender's vertical plane

violations: actions by players that break the rules but are not fouls

*Referee indicates a floor violation with an open hand in the air

The following are common ball handling violations:

*Charging

*Double Dribble

*Backcourt

*Traveling

zone defense:

a defense where each defender is responsible for an area of the court and must guard any player who enters that area

*Not allowed for 3-4

Game Time-- Basketball:

Arrive at least 15 minutes early

Even after all these years I find myself very nervous before refereeing a game. Once I step out on the court with my whistle around my neck I am in "Ref Mode" and much of my nervousness dissipates.

Shake hands with the coaches

Even if you know them or wouldn't normally shake hands on greeting them under different circumstances. This is part of "Ref Mode" for me. A good firm hand shake shows your confidence.

Tell each coach: "I need you to remind your players to take off all jewelry and make sure they have mouthguards in place."

This is a quick reminder. Everyone knows the rules already.

*It is the refs responsibility to do his/her utmost to prevent injury.

***Mouthguards are mandatory**

***A player who does not have a mouthguard cannot play.** No exceptions! Even if the player cries and begs. Even if the coach cries and begs.

*If at any time during play you notice that a player does not have a mouth guard, blow the whistle. (You may chose to wait if the player is not in the action and the other team has a scoring opportunity). Send the player off the court and award two free throws to the opposing team. It should be considered an intentional technical foul.

Check-in with Score/Time Keepers Table

- *Make sure to thank them
- *Having a good relationship with them will make your job easier
- *Ask them if they will help keep track of team fouls for you (I find this very difficult to do myself--unless of course the scoreboard records them)

Address the teams and spectators before the game:

- *See sample statement at end or make up your own
- *I put notes on index cards so I don't forget to say something important
- *Make people feel welcome
- *State clear behavior expectations
- *I list rule modifications--I find it deters disagreement if everyone is clear about what the rules actually are right from the beginning
- *It only really takes a couple of minutes to do all this

Have players match up at the center line. (This may not be necessary at the 5-6 level)
Have them shake hands. It's a nice gesture that sets the tone for friendly competition.

Tip-Off:

- *Ref should blow the whistle, step in and throw ball up (in between jumpers) high enough to make players jump
- *In some of our gyms, you will have to imagine the circle which the non-jumpers stand outside of

Blow the whistle harder than you think is necessary when you make a call. Everyone needs to hear it. Make your calls as loud as possible. The players, coaches, and spectators need to know what's going on.

- *A loud whistle shows that you are confident about your call

Call what you see!

- *You're not going to see everything. It's just not possible.
- *It's in the rule book: If it is unclear who the ball went out on use the possession arrow
- *It's better to miss a call than to call something wrong.
- *It is okay to blow the whistle because you can tell something is wrong and then take a second to decide what really happened.
- *Never make a call or change a call based on what coaches or spectators yell at you.

Hand and Whistle Signals :

- *I have listed the hand signals that I know next to the definitions of terms above
- *If you have the time and the inclination learning the official signals, though not necessary for this level of play, is a good idea. They can be found in the NFHS handbook and in some on-line sites.
- *I always try to point in the direction the ball is to go. (Especially at the 3 /4 level players can be confused about the direction of play especially right after half-time.

Substitution:

- *All substitutions are made from the timekeepers table
- *Substitutions can be made by either team during any dead ball
- *A player awarded foul shots needs to take those shots him/herself

Reminder on Possession:

- *Start of game (first quarter) is determined by jump ball. First non-jumper to catch the ball becomes the team in possession
- *Second quarter: opposite team inbounds at half across from table
- *Third quarter: according to possession arrow, inbounds at half across from table
- *Fourth quarter: according to possession arrow, inbounds at half across from table

At the end of the game:

- *Line up with the home team and shake hands with the visiting players and coaches.

Sample Pre-Game Statement for 3-4 Basketball:

- *This is the statement I make before each 3-4 game I ref. You are welcome to use it and modify it as you like:

Hi everybody my name is Ceylan Cross. I'm one of your refs tonight. On behalf of the Calais Elementary School, Calais Rec Association, and the WCSU Rec Council I'd like to welcome you to our game tonight and thank you for your continued support of youth sports. Your attendance tonight is very much appreciated.

I want to take a few minutes to remind everyone that this is a 3rd- 4th grade game and the emphasis of this program is on safety, sportsmanship, and skill building. Games are meant to be a positive learning experience for these young athletes.

In keeping with that philosophy here is a quick run down of the rule modifications for this level of play:

- Because our gym does not allow the three feet of space required outside the line for a throw in we give three feet inside the line (that's two tiles on the floor).
- Offensive players are allowed five seconds inside the key, not just three. I will verbally warn them and it will be a long five seconds
- Back court defense is not allowed
- Zone defense is not allowed
- Double teaming, outside the key area, is not allowed
- If at any time during the game one team is ahead of the other by more than 20 points, we expect that the coach of that team will put the competitive balance rule into effect and only allow shots to be taken by previously non-scoring players or only after 5 consecutive successful passes.

Does anyone have any questions or need any clarification about the rules or the rule modifications?

If you have any questions later I would be happy to answer them at the half or at the end of the game.

I also want to let you all know that there is no personal foul limit, no "fouling out", at this level. However, unsportsmanlike conduct of any kind--whether from a player, a coach,

or a spectator will absolutely not be tolerated and may result in disqualification from the game.

We ask that spectators refrain from yelling coaching directions at the players and we ask that everyone accept and respect the referees' authority to call the game.

With all that said I want to thank you again for coming out tonight. It should be a great game. I hope you enjoy it.

Thank you.

Modify for 5-6:

*Player that commits 5 personal fouls is disqualified for the remainder of the game

*An offensive player cannot remain in the key area for more than **3** seconds

*Zone defense is allowed

Putting It All Together:

Buy a high quality whistle and practice using it before your first game. Blow the whistle as hard as you can to make clear your authority and convey confidence in your calls.

Be Clear About Your Role:

You Are the Referee.

*The quality of the refereeing has a huge effect on the overall experience of these young athletes. Take this role very seriously. It is an awesome responsibility and can also be very rewarding.

*Your main responsibilities are to prevent injury and promote fair play.

*Don't be a jerk, but you don't need to be really friendly either.

*Be professional. Even if a player is my own child, when in "Ref Mode," I call all players by their number or team color. I find this helps me maintain the distance necessary to call the game fairly.

*Players on both teams need to be confident that you do not side with either team.

*You should however take the time at this level to explain rules to players (especially if they look really confused which they often will).

*Remember that your role as Referee is a big part of the learning experience of the game

*Be firm and clear about the rules.

You Are Not the Coach.

*Once you are on the field you should be in "Ref Mode". This means that you do not give

coaching directions to any player at any time. This can be very difficult at this level because often you will know the players and want to help them when you see mistakes.

You Are A Volunteer.

*You are not being paid and you are not under any contract. You have stepped up to help often when no one else would.

*Remember that you are doing a huge favor for coaches, players, and spectators.

*Everyone should be very grateful to you but often in the heat of the game it will not seem that way.

*It's not easy, but the truth is you can step off the field/court at any time if it is truly not working out for you. Just keeping this in mind has got me through some tough spots.

*Once in a very heated 5-6 game where spectators were yelling aggressively at the Ref he walked off the court and without saying a word handed the whistle to the father who had been leading the riot. It took only a moment for apologies to be made and the Referee to take the field again. I wouldn't recommend this and now that the Referee has been empowered to issue warnings, etc. it shouldn't be necessary. But the message was clear to everyone: "I am a volunteer. I do not have to be here."

You Don't Need to Take It From Anyone.

*I've often heard it said that you need a thick skin to be a referee. I actually have a very thin skin, but over the years I have learned to be very clear about my role. I consider this to be a great strength.

*I don't usually run the line the spectators are on because I do not want to hear even passing comments. Sometimes the coaches are even worse.

*I am sure there would be many more volunteer refs if people could be guaranteed that no one would yell at or criticize them. With more and more emphasis being placed on good sportsmanship from the players, coaches, and spectators, I have seen less and less of this in recent years.

*The truth is that most people who are involved with sports are competitive by nature and people do get carried away by the excitement of the game.

*Basketball has the added challenge that you have a lot of people in a confined space. The acoustics and noise level at a basketball game (between the pounding of players feet, the timer buzzers, and spectator cheering/jeering) can be very intense. To a certain extent it is the nature of the game. It is very exciting for everyone but can be very intimidating--especially for inexperienced referees.

*The Referee is an easy scapegoat. In other words: I can not guarantee that no one will criticize or yell at you. But I can tell you that you don't need to just stand there and take it.

*WCSU (and NFHS) gives the Referee the authority to issue warnings and even eject from the game players, coaches, or spectators who are harassing them or behaving in an unsporting manner.

*Be clear about your role. Be firm about the rules and the behavior expected at games.

*Don't be afraid to call a technical foul where it is warranted

*If you end up in an uncomfortable situation get a coach to step in and help you handle it.

*Don't be embarrassed to ask someone to step in and help you if necessary. It seems like you are alone out there but you really are not. If you end up in over your head you'd be surprised at how much back up you'll find.

*Remember that coaches are ultimately responsible for the behavior of their teams' spectators.

***Remember: You do not need to answer back or argue with anyone at any time for any reason!**

Worst Case Scenarios:

The Game Feels Out Of Control:

*Sometimes this happens. The energy between two well matched equally aggressive teams can sometimes spiral out of control. This is especially true if the coaches and spectators are yelling aggressively. On several occasions I have blown the whistle loud in the middle of play and just yelled: "I need everyone to take it down a notch!"

*One way to deal with this is to start calling every little thing you can possibly call until everyone calms down

Coaches Are Being Aggressive:

*Many coaches are very intense but if they cross the line into being aggressive or abusive towards players or you don't be afraid to talk to them. I blow the whistle and tell the players to take a knee. Then I go over to the offending coach, very firmly, "I need you to stop or this game will be over." You don't need to have any further conversation. Walk away even if they are trying to argue with you. Put the ball back into play.

*I would call a Technical Foul and have the opposing team take free throws for this, but you may choose not to.

*If the behavior doesn't stop go back over and tell the coach to leave the gym. If you don't feel comfortable doing it yourself get the home team coach or someone else to do it for/with you.

*If they won't leave, end the game

*Make sure to report this type of behavior to the AD/Principal of the school the coach is representing

Spectators Are Criticizing You:

*Try to ignore the small stuff as much as you possibly can.

*If someone is actually being aggressive or abusive it is the responsibility of the coaches to handle their spectators.

*Stop play (or wait for a good time to stop) and report what's going on to the coach.

* If they do not stop, they should be asked to leave

* If they do not leave, end the game

There Is A Minor Injury:

*If someone seems to be hurt stop play (even if the player is still standing). Remember these are young kids and safety is our number one concern.

*Tell all players to take a knee. Young players especially tend to circle in close out of sympathy and curiosity. Have them back off. Coaches/Parents need to be able to make sure the injured player is okay and assist them off the field/court if necessary.

*Remember that even a tiny amount of blood means the player needs to leave the field/court and receive first aid. The cut needs to be covered. A player is not allowed to play with any blood on his/her body or uniform.

There Is A Major Injury:

***If a player is bleeding severely, writhing in pain, knocked unconscious, or is convulsing, clear the field/court immediately.**

*It can be very traumatic for young players to witness a major injury. The less they see up close the better.

*Yell: "Clear The Field/Court!" and wave the players to the benches. Call the players coach/parents onto the field/court.

*For basketball I would recommend clearing the gym

*Every school should have an emergency plan. The head coach for the home team is responsible for knowing the procedure for calling 911.

* Keep in mind that many injuries are made worse by moving the injured person

*If an ambulance is called make sure to have spectators clear their cars asap from where the ambulance needs to get through

***For most serious injuries a quick response time is essential!**

Accident Reporting:

In the case of any injury, an accident report form must be filed with the school or organization hosting the game/practice. Use school forms whenever possible. These forms document injury and follow-up actions by coaches or other responsible adults, and are necessary to allow for tracking of treatment of injuries and to minimize liability concerns.

Incident Reporting:

Any incident that may result in a subsequent communication between the players, coaches, families, or other adults and the principal or athletic organization should be followed with a verbal report to the principal or organization representative to alert them that a significant event has occurred. This will allow for more proactive followup and fewer surprises for all.