

The Great Northwest Basketball League

Rules for 3rd & 4th Grade 2009 Fall Non-Competitive League

1. **Purpose of the 3rd & 4th Grade Fall Non-Competitive League.** The 3rd and 4th Grade Fall Non-Competitive League is intended to be a development opportunity for beginning basketball players to teach them the basic skills and understanding of the game so they can effectively compete when they begin full-scale traveling basketball. Because this League involves virtually “no cost” (no referees, no awards, etc.), only a negligible \$25 per boys or girls “grade” or “Division” League fee will be charged. The focus will be on teaching, rather than simply coaching, with both coaches trying to help the players on both teams improve. For a player, sometimes hearing a coach other than your own make a point will leave a more lasting impression. By not keeping score (officially or unofficially), we allow the less accomplished players and teams to improve in an environment where they need not be embarrassed. If we as coaches all do our jobs well, all of these players, when they start playing in regular League meets, will be able to dribble a ball without looking at it, not travel excessively, know how to shoot with proper form, use a pivot foot, know how to set a screen, understand proper defensive position, demonstrate good sportsmanship and, above all, enjoy playing the game more than when they started.
2. **Divisions.** There will be separate playing divisions for 3rd and 4th graders. The 3rd grade teams will be called the “Red” Division and will use 8-foot baskets. The 4th grade teams will be called the “Blue” Division and will use 10-foot baskets. Participant communities don’t need to follow these guidelines rigidly. If they want, communities can divide their teams by height, rather than grade level, with taller 3rd graders playing in the Blue Division and shorter 4th graders playing in the Red Division. Communities can even switch certain players between their Blue and Red Division teams from week to week to give the taller 3rd grader and the shorter 4th grader some experience at each level. Communities can also divide their players by ability, with stronger players put in the “Blue” Division. Participants are not allowed, however, to have taller, or more accomplished, 4th graders play in the Red Division.

Communities are not required to field both a Blue and a Red Division team in order to play in the League. Basketball programs that do not participate broadly in the competitive Great Northwest League (higher grades up to 8th grade), are ineligible to play in the 3rd and 4th grade Non-Competitive League.

3. **Rosters.** Communities may, but are not required to, form specific teams, with separate rosters for each. They may also adjust their rosters each week to accommodate some parents’ desires to have their child play as many Saturdays as possible, while other parents may want to have their child play only two or three.

For example, let’s assume that Community A has 16 fourth graders (or tall third graders) who they want to play in the Blue Division. They could divide these 16 players in one of three ways:

- Two separate teams of 8 players each.

- All 16 players on one team, with 10 different players on the roster each of 8 Saturdays for a total of 5 meets per player ($16 \times 5 \div 10 = 8$ meets).
- All 16 players as one team, with 10 children playing each Saturday, but with an acknowledgement that some parents want their child to play more Saturdays, and some less. For example:

▪ 2 players play 8 meets	(2 x 8)	= 16
▪ 5 players play 6 meets	(5 x 6)	= 30
▪ 2 players play 5 meets	(2 x 5)	= 10
▪ 3 players play 4 meets	(3 x 4)	= 12
▪ 4 players play 3 meets	(4 x 3)	= <u>12</u>
		80 Player Roster Spots
		$\div 8$ Meets
		10 Players per meet

Communities are strongly encouraged, but not absolutely required, to bring between eight and ten players to each meet. With less than eight, players may get too tired. However, more than ten will make substitutions difficult. Players of this age will lose focus on the sideline, and the additional mass substitutions will slow the progress of each game.

4. **Hosting.** Every community in the League will ideally host at least once, and twice if fielding a large number of teams with a relatively large number of play dates each.

When hosting, a community will need two playing surfaces, preferably with baskets that can be adjusted from 10' to 8' and back to 10'. Communities that do not have adjustable baskets will still be able to host, but only in the Blue Division (which means if they have a team in the Red Division, that team will have no home meets).

Even though any given team will be at each meet for only 2½ hours, the host community will often have a 5 or 7½ hour hosting commitment per date. When hosting three Groups on a Saturday, Group A will play between 9:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Group B will play from 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Group C (if there is a third Group – some meets will have only one or two Groups) will play from 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Each “Group” will consist of four teams. Communities are permitted to host a combination of boys and girls events on the same date (e.g., Community A could host Blue girls from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., Red boys from 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and Blue boys from 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.) If the host community is hosting three Groups and has only two teams (whether two in the Blue, two in the Red, or one Blue and one Red), there will be one Group in which the host community will not have a team (usually the middle of three time slots). Likewise, if the host community has only one team (whether in the Red Division or the Blue Division), there will be one or two Groups in which the host community will not have a team.

The objective is to have each participant community host a sufficient number of dates so that they provide as many (or more) playing spots as they use. We will make an exception for those communities fielding only a Red team where that community does not have adjustable baskets (that team will not be required to host). Since each time a community hosts, they are

creating eight to twelve playing spots (two Groups x four teams in each Group = eight spots; three Groups x four teams in each Group = 12 spots), communities need to think in terms of hosting in a ratio of 12:1. For example:

- Community A has one Blue Division girls team and one Red Division girls team and each wants to play six dates. They are using 12 spots ($2 \times 6 = 12$) and would need to host once ($1 \times 12 = 12$) to meet their hosting obligation.
 - Community B has two Blue Division teams (one boys and one girls) and two Red Division teams (one boys and one girls) and each wants to play five dates. They are using 20 spots ($4 \times 5 = 20$) and would need to host twice ($2 \times 12 = 24$) to cover these spots.
 - Community C has only one Blue Division boys team, wanting to play five dates. Even though they are playing in only five spots ($1 \times 5 = 5$), they may be asked to host in two time slots to fully cover the space they use.
 - Community D has three teams (two Blue girls and one Red girls). They want the two Blue teams to play five dates each and the one Red team to play four dates, which means they are using 14 spots [$(2 \times 5) + (1 \times 4) = 14$]. While they technically would need to host a second time (or cut back two play dates), they may not need to if sufficient teams like Communities B and C have created sufficient extra space than they are using (see examples above).
 - Community E has two teams (one Blue boys and one Red boys), each wanting to play four meets. However, Community E does not have adjustable baskets. In this case, since Community E can't host Red Division games, it will likely be asked to host two Blue Division groups back-to-back on the same day.
5. **Format.** Each four team Group at each meet will get 30 minutes of practice time, followed by a 30 minute running clock game against one opponent, followed by a 15 minute rest period/instructional time, followed by a 30 minute game against a second opponent, followed by a second 15 minute rest period/instructional time, followed by a 30 minute game against a third opponent. The schedule at each full meet, then, will be as follows:

Group A

9:00 – 9:30 a.m.	Group A	Practice time	
9:30 – 10:00 a.m.	Group A	Teams 1 v 2	Teams 3 v 4
10:00 – 10:15 a.m.	Group A	Rest time	
10:15 – 10:45 a.m.	Group A	Teams 1 v 3	Teams 2 v 4
10:45 – 11:00 a.m.	Group A	Rest time	
11:00 – 11:30 a.m.	Group A	Teams 1 v 4	Teams 2 v 3

Group B

11:30 – Noon	Group B	Practice time	
Noon – 12:30 p.m.	Group B	Teams 5 v 6	Teams 7 v 8
12:30 – 12:45 p.m.	Group B	Rest time	
12:45 – 1:15 p.m.	Group B	Teams 5 v 7	Teams 6 v 8
1:15 – 1:30 p.m.	Group B	Rest time	
1:30 – 2:00 p.m.	Group B	Teams 5 v 8	Teams 6 v 7

Group C

(Note: not all meets will have a 3rd Group)

2:00 – 2:30 p.m.	Group C	Practice time	
2:30 – 3:00 p.m.	Group C	Teams 9 v 10	Teams 11 v 12
3:00 – 3:15 p.m.	Group C	Rest time	
3:15 – 3:45 p.m.	Group C	Teams 9 v 11	Teams 10 v 12
3:45 – 4:00 p.m.	Group C	Rest time	
4:00 – 4:30 p.m.	Group C	Teams 9 v 12	Teams 10 v 11

The opening 30-minute practice time is provided at each meet for several reasons:

- Many teams may have a difficult time getting gym space during some weeks in their hometown.
- Players at this age are likely to be better prepared to get the most out of each game if they have a refresher before taking the court.
- For those communities that do not have adjustable baskets, this may be one of the few practice opportunities that Red Division players have to shoot at an 8' basket.

During each practice session, each team will be able to use one basket (half of one of the two courts). Teams not wishing to use the practice time can simply show up a little later, but must be on time for their first game. Each game will start and end precisely at the posted time. Therefore, if a team is 15 minutes late at the beginning of a session, they will lose 15 minutes of practice time, but the first game will still start on time.

For each game, the five starting players from each team will be on the court and ready for the jump ball at the exact time the game is posted to begin. A 9:30 a.m. start time doesn't mean that the coach begins to organize his/her players for their first game at 9:30 a.m.; but that they are on the court, ready to begin at 9:30 a.m.

When host communities host only one or two Groups on a specific Saturday, the first Group will generally start at 9:30 a.m. (instead of 9:00 a.m.). Start times will also be adjusted on a case-by-case basis to accommodate local gym availability and related scheduling issues.

6. **No Score/Scorekeepers.** There will be no scorekeepers or scoreboard functioning. The purpose of these games is to give young players court time; not determine who has won or lost. Coaches should refrain from, and discourage parents and players from, keeping track of the score in some other way.
7. **No Clock/ Clock Operators.** There will be no scoreboard clock and, therefore, no clock operator. Each game will be 30 minutes of running time in length.
8. **Referees/Officiating.** There will be no third party officials. Each team will provide one coach to referee (each must have a whistle). While there will be no “official” referees on the court wearing a striped shirt, it is critical that the coach from each team who is refereeing be very knowledgeable about the rules of the game. Given the relative inexperience of these players, most infractions (e.g., traveling, three seconds, over and back) should not be called closely. Players should be given warnings and, even on a whistled infraction, the coaches should tell all 10 players (plus those on the sidelines), not just his/her players, why the whistle was blown. Each stoppage of time is an opportunity to teach. Make a point in 10-15 seconds and move on – don’t lecture to the point that the players are getting more lecture time than playing time. Be judicious in blowing the whistle. At this age level, one could blow the whistle every 5 seconds. Let them play, even with some infractions; blow the whistle when something stands out that is so noticeable that you’d be concerned some of the players will begin developing bad habits, or get confused about the rules, unless the incorrect actions are addressed.

Treat these games as a controlled scrimmage. Be positive and encouraging, teach when making corrections, and focus on the big issues. Coaches who are officiating should use slightly higher standards in the Blue Division than in the Red; and expect more from all players later in the season than early on.

Each team should have one coach as an official on the court, but no more. If each team has two adults on the court, it gets too congested. When officiating, coaches should position themselves much as certified officials do – one under the basket, the other at half court. Both officials need to stay out of the way so as not to impede a player’s path during the game.

The biggest points of contention at 3rd and 4th grade games usually occur when one coach on the floor wants to call the game very close and another wants to ignore most infractions. This usually happens where one team is significantly more developed than the other, with the coach of the stronger team arguing that he/she doesn't want his/her team to develop bad habits. In these cases, the coaches need to *privately* reach a middle ground consensus about how close to call the game and not argue in front of their players, or bring parents on the sideline into the debate. The League prefers that games be called more closely than too loosely. While inexperienced players will travel, double dribble and set illegal picks (probably the three most common violations), teams should be addressing these issues in practice. It doesn't take a good coach long to address most of these basic skill sets.

9. **Scheduling.** On most Saturdays, there will be two or more venues in each Division to allow teams from some distance apart to play each other. For instance, when Prescott hosts, the League would try to have the other venue be a community like Barron, so that no team would have too long a trip.

Meets will be scheduled on one of eight Saturdays: October 17, October 24, October 31, November 7, November 14, November 28, December 5, and December 12. While no team will be forced to play more dates than they want, all teams will be expected to be reasonably flexible within that time period (except on November 21) and be available as many of those Saturdays as possible.

10. **Cost.** There will be no per meet entry fee. There will be no awards or referees to pay. If there is a facility charge for gym rental or janitorial services, the host team must bear that expense directly. The only League fee will be a once per season \$25 charge for each “grade” or “Division” for which teams are entered. In other words, a community can enter one, two or three Blue Division boys teams for a \$25 fee for the entire season. If entering Blue and Red Division boys (or girls) teams, the total fee is \$50. If a community enters one or more boys and girls teams in both the Blue and Red Division, the maximum program fee is \$100.
11. **Concessions.** Host communities are not required to run a concession stand and are discouraged from doing so, to keep this League simple. Since most players and parents will be there for only two and one-half hours, there’s no need to eat a meal, and game time beverages can be brought in by each team. If the players need a snack (granola bar, fruit snacks, etc.), these can easily be brought in by parents and coaches as well. If a host community has a strong desire to run a concession stand, it can do so, but should not bank on heavy sales.
12. **Awards.** Unlike regular meets at the older age levels, there will be no awards at 3rd and 4th grade Fall Non-Competitive League meets. This will keep expenses low and meet administration simple; also, since there are no winners or losers (we’re not keeping score), the concept of an award at every meet doesn’t make much sense.
13. **Attire.** Fouls will be called in each game, but we will not keep track of fouls, so that no player will foul out of a game. Therefore, there is no need for players to wear numbered jerseys or t-shirts. However, attire from the waist up must be all of the same color for a given team. Since there will be times when both teams will have the same color regular t-shirt or jersey, each team must have one of the following: an alternate color t-shirt, a regular shirt or jersey that is reversible, or a practice mesh vest that can be slipped over the top of the regular jersey or t-shirt. The latter is probably the least expensive in the long run (you can re-use for many years). If using an actual second shirt, white is an ideal alternate color, because most kids have a white t-shirt in their closet. Also note that while most communities will supply identical shirts to each player, shirts need only be the same color, not the same design. (As a result, a player can use a shirt of that color from his or her existing wardrobe.)

14. **Substitutions.** Players at this age need a lot of direction and instructions on what to do when going into a game. Each team should try (although it's not required) to have two coaches at each meet, so one can help officiate the game and the other manage substitutions. Before each game, coaches from the two teams about to play should confer as to how often they want to make substitutions, so that both teams make substitutions at the same time. This will cut down on the amount of explanation/lecture time in each half-hour game and will maximize playing time. Teams should also substitute their entire bench when making a substitution (unless they have more than ten players in attendance, which we strongly discourage – see Paragraph 3 of these Rules). This will also work to reduce explanation/lecture time and maximize actual playing time.
15. **Time-Outs.** There will be no stoppage of play for “halftime” and no time-outs. If a player is tired, ill or injured, this should be handled with a simple substitution. Since informal instruction is being provided by the coaches each time there is a blown whistle or a substitution, formal time-outs are not needed.
16. **Fouls.** As noted in Paragraph 12, fouls will be called, but will not be tracked, so that no players can foul out of a game. As with other infractions (e.g., traveling, double dribble), fouls should not be called as closely as in regular games for more experienced players. However, we do not want players learning bad habits when it comes to untoward intentional contact with opposing players. Therefore, fouls should be called more closely than most infractions. While a player cannot foul out, coaches should use common sense and pull a player out of a game for a period of instruction and contemplation if guilty of several overly-aggressive, overly-rough or intentional contacts in a short period of time.

When a foul is called, whether it is in the act of shooting or not, the team being fouled can choose where they want to take the ball out of bounds (i.e., we do not shoot free throws, even when fouled in the act of shooting). Most teams will want to take it out directly under the basket at which they are shooting. The reason for this rule is to create some negative impact to committing a foul. If the fouled team has to take the ball out wherever fouled, the fouled team is actually being disadvantaged, since successfully inbounding the ball at this age level is actually one of the more difficult tasks. The coach for the fouled team who is helping officiate the game should immediately decide in each instance where to inbound the ball and proceed to that part of the floor, to give his/her player the ball to inbound.

17. **Tie-Ups.** Since there is no clock operator or scorekeeper, there will be no possession arrow. Where one player from each team has mutual possession of the ball (the ball is “tied up”), the ball will be awarded to the team in the defensive zone. In other words, the team that is furthest away from the basket at which it is shooting will get the ball out of bounds in the case of a “tie-up”. The only jump ball will be at the start of the game or where the tie-up is exactly at center court.

18. **Defense.** Only person-to-person defenses will be allowed (i.e., no zones) with no pressure defense before half-court. In games that become one-sided after several possessions, or where one team consistently has the ball stolen from them after crossing half-court, the stronger team will be instructed by both referees to not pick up the offensive players above the free throw line extended.

19. **Pre-Meet Phone Calls.** Unlike the League for the older age levels, our League staff will make all pre-meet phone calls to participant teams about one week in advance to confirm their attendance at a meet. If a scheduled team is not planning to attend, the League will arrange a replacement and notify the host team of that fact.

20. **Cancellations.** Consistent with The Great Northwest Basketball League's rules on non-weather related cancellations, teams that fail to show at a scheduled meet with insufficient notice to find a replacement, for any reason other than bad weather, will have that team or coach excluded from participation in League meets the next season. That includes Blue Division or 4th grade teams that would otherwise play in the regular League the next season.

If one team fails to show for a meet, whether for weather-related or other reasons, that meet will be re-formatted as follows (for purposes of this example we will use the 9:00 time slot):

- 9:00 – 9:30 All three teams practice.
- 9:30 – 9:50 Team A v Team B, Team C rests or practices.
- 9:50 – 10:10 Team B v Team C, Team A rests or practices.
- 10:10 – 10:30 Team A v Team C, Team B rests or practices.
- 10:30 – 10:50 Team A v Team B, Team C rests or practices.
- 10:50 – 11:10 Team B v Team C, Team A rests or practices.
- 11:10 – 11:30 Team A v Team C, Team B rests or practices.

Team A will be whichever team has the fewest players (Team A has to play back to back only once). If the host team is not Team A, the host team shall be Team C.