



## HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

### *GENERAL PLAYING RULES*

The game of basketball is easy to understand. Players try to prevent their opponents from scoring while each team tries to get the ball through the basket that the other team is defending. A tremendous amount of mental and physical endurance and skill is required from the five players on each team.



A basketball team consists of a center (often the tallest player), two forwards and two guards (often the shortest players). The forwards are positioned near the opposing team's basket so that they can be ready for shooting and rebounding. The center is located near the basket or near the free-throw line so that he/she can be ready for shooting and rebounding. Guards normally bring the ball down the court to begin offensive play.

The game begins with a jump ball. The referee tosses the ball into the air. As it comes down, one player from each team jumps upward in an attempt to tap the ball to a teammate. Once the ball is in play, team members dribble the ball in order to get closer to the basket or pass it to another player. "Dribbling" the ball means bouncing it on the floor repeatedly with one hand. "Passing" means throwing the ball to a teammate. Passing is vital to scoring plays. In fact, most professionals consider good passing to be almost as important as accurate shooting.



When the ball is put into the basket, it is called a "field goal" and two points are awarded to the team that scores. If the shot, however, was taken past the three-point line, then three points are earned. The National Basketball Association instituted a new distance of 20'-6" from the basket for the 3-point line. A "free throw" means a toss from behind the free-throw line, with no interference from the

opposing team. If a player has been fouled by an opponent, the fouled player gets a free throw. If the free throw ball goes into the basket, the team gets one point.

There are two types of fouls in basketball—personal fouls and technical fouls:

A personal foul means that a player holds, pushes or trips an opponent.

A technical foul may occur when the game is delayed, too many time-outs are taken, players leave or enter the court illegally or participate in misbehavior such as disrespect toward the referee.

A team may lose possession of the ball for “traveling.” Traveling occurs when a player runs or walks with the ball. Double dribbling (bouncing the ball with both hands or stopping dribbling, then starting again) can also cause a team to lose possession of the ball.



### *DEFENSE AND OFFENSE*

Professional basketball teams play four 12-minute quarters. College-level play amounts to two 20-minute halves, and high school basketball is four 8-minute quarters. In the case of a tie game, teams play overtime.

Professional teams play 5-minute overtimes. High school and college teams play shorter overtimes.

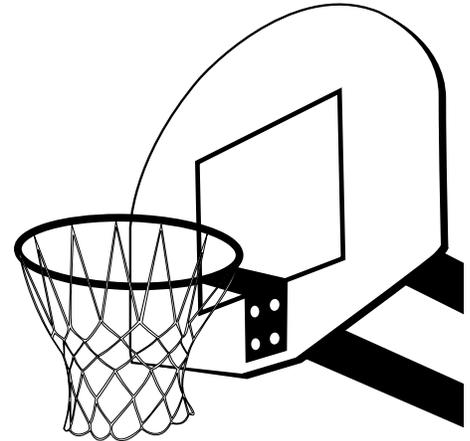
### **DEFENSE**

The zone and player-to-player (once called “man-to-man”) systems are two defensive techniques. The zone system uses each player as a guard, protecting a specific zone near the basket that his/her team is defending. Guarding the ball is more important than any particular player in this type of defense.

In the player-to-player (“man-to-man”) system, the opposite is true. Each player guards a player from the opposing team in order to keep the opposition from scoring.

### OFFENSE

The fast-break offensive style offers fast movement from one part of the court to another and a chance for scoring. It is characterized by fast, quick passes down the court and using more players on the attack than the opposition has for their defense.



Slower, more deliberate play characterizes the slow-break style. This technique calls for more thoughtful action; players maneuver carefully in order to shoot in this type of offense.

### PLAYING TECHNIQUES

#### *TYPES OF SHOTS*

##### ONE-HAND SHOT

A shot executed with both hands holding the ball initially. The ball is then pushed into the basket with one hand.

##### TWO-HANDED SHOT

A shot usually made when a player is not close to the basket. The ball is thrown with two hands. This type of shot tends to be quite accurate.

##### JUMP SHOT

A shot in which the player shoots the ball into the basket at the top of the jump.

##### DUNK SHOT

This shot is made by jumping high into the air and throwing with force the ball down through the basket.

**LAY-UP**

A shot in which a basket is attempted from under the net; generally considered one of the easier shots.

**TIP-IN**

A shot in which the ball is tapped back into the basket as it rebounds from the backboard.

**FREE-THROW**

A shot in which a player who has been fouled shoots from behind the free-throw line.

***BASIC PASSES*****TWO-HANDED  
CHEST PASS**

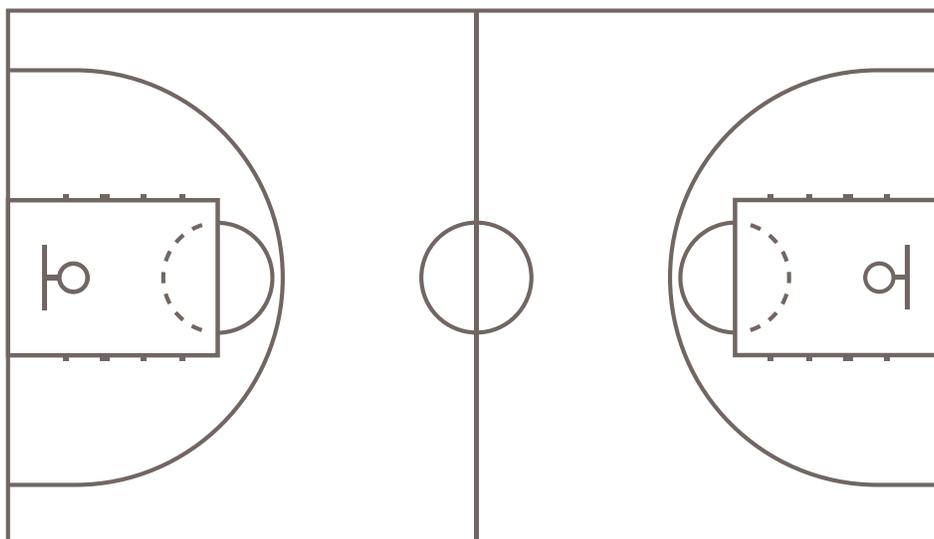
A pass used for short, fast passing of distances up to twenty feet.

**TWO-HANDED  
PASS**

A popular pass that can be used from anywhere on the court; especially good for closely-guarded players.

**ONE-HANDED  
OVERHEAD PASS**

A pass used as a long pass from any position on the court. Like all one-hand passes, this move takes more time to perform and requires excellent control.



**BOUNCE PASS**

This pass is used when two players are relatively close to each other. The ball usually bounces once before being caught by the other player.

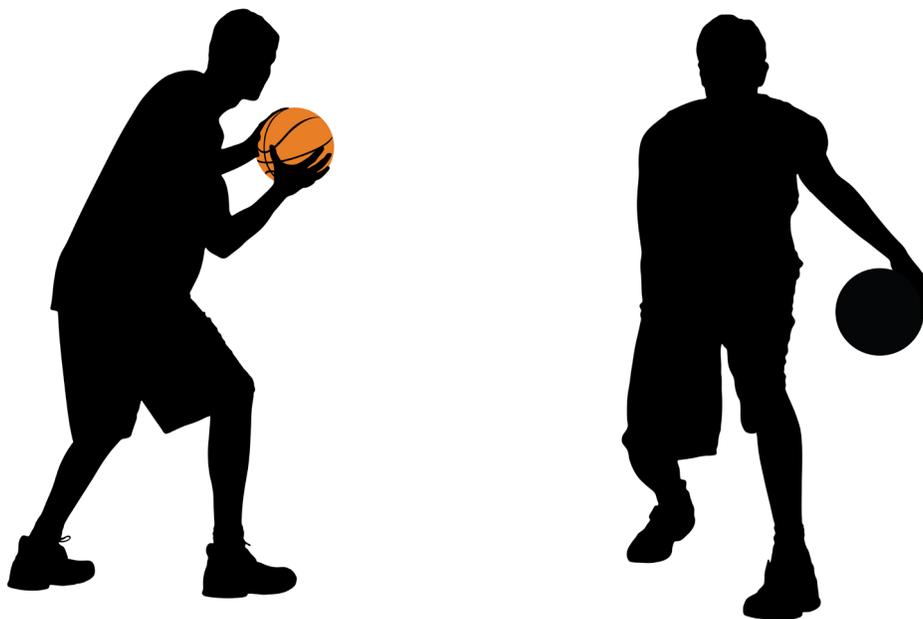
**ONE-HAND  
UNDERHAND PASS**

An effective move when the passer is moving at fast speeds; difficult to perform and should be used only when no alternative exists.

**EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING**

A basketball is about two and a half feet in circumference and weighs 22 ounces. Baskets are made of a metal ring with an inside diameter of 18 inches. Netting or webbing hangs from the ring. Two baskets, one at each end of the court, hang 10 feet above the floor. The standard basketball court measures about 50 feet by 94 feet.

Clothing is loose-fitting and designed for freedom of movement. Contemporary “long shorts” were made popular by superstar Michael Jordan of the Chicago Bulls. Shoes are specially designed to withstand pounding the floor in jumps and other movements, as well as to brace the feet and ankles during violent lateral movements.



**BASKETBALL NOTES**

Basketball is played competitively at several levels. Many high school teams operate under the jurisdiction of their school district and state athletic association. At the college and university level the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) sponsors both men and women teams and championship tournaments. Basketball is also a professional sport with both men and women teams. Some top players earn as much as 30 million dollars or more a year.

Basketball is an Olympic sport. This competition occurs every four years in the summer, where gold, silver and bronze medals are given to the top men and women teams. The 2008 Olympics were held in Beijing, the 2012 in London and 2016 in Brazil.

A recent rule change by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) now allows lane players who are in marked lane spaces (during free throw shooting) to move into the lane when the ball is released by the free-throw shooter. Before these players couldn't move into the lane until the ball hit the rim or backboard.

Basketball is the second-most popular sport for females and third-most popular for males at the high school level, according to a recent High School Athletics Participation Survey conducted by the NFHS, with 433,120 females and 538,676 males participating nationwide. The sport ranks first in school sponsorship of female and male teams with 17,493 schools sponsoring the sport for females and 17,856 sponsoring the sport for males.

There are, however, many levels of basketball competition. Most cities and towns offer amateur clubs or teams. Some are sponsored by such organizations as YMCA's or local park districts.

**To find out more about this sport visit these basketball websites:**

[www.nba.com](http://www.nba.com)

[www.ncaa.com](http://www.ncaa.com)

[www.wnba.com](http://www.wnba.com)