THE GREAT NORTHWEST BASKETBALL LEAGUE

D) Game Rules

1) **WIAA Rules**. Except as specified below, **WIAA *high school*** game rules (***not*** WIAA ***middle school*** game rules) will be followed. A copy of such rules can be obtained from your boys' or girls' varsity coach or by contacting the National Federation of State High School Associations (*www.nfhs.com*, then click on "Basketball.")

2) **Length of Game Periods.** Each game will consist of four, seven-minute periods with clock stoppages for all time-outs, out of bounds plays, possession arrow changes, free throws and all other times a game clock is normally stopped under official basketball rules. While the WIAA is using 18-minute halves at the high school level, we will continue to use the four-quarter format. Coaches at the younger grade levels often need the extra breaks to have sufficient time to help and instruct younger players. If the WIAA moves to halves for Middle School teams, we will reconsider this.

   For all grade levels, if one team is behind by more than 15 points after the third period, the fourth period may be played using a running clock. If this happens, the running clock will be used for the full fourth period, even if the losing team closes the margin to less than 16 points at some point during the fourth period. Where the running clock is used in the fourth period, the clock will be stopped only for time-outs taken by one of the teams, substitutions, an injury on the court or for any other reason that the referees decide to call an official's time-out. **The coach of the losing team has the option of <u>waiving</u> the running clock rule, provided that the meet is running on time or ahead of schedule.** The clock operator will ask the head coach of any team losing by sixteen or more points at the end of the third quarter whether they want the clock run. The only time that the clock will be run without the consent of the losing team's coach is if the **Tournament Director** (***not*** the game officials) feels the clock must be run to help get a meet that is running significantly behind back on schedule.

3) **Time Between Periods**. There will be a 1-minute break between each period, whether in regulation or in overtime. The one exception will be between the second and third periods, where there will be a 3-minute ("half time") break. In the interest of remaining on schedule, a 3-minute break allows a coach extra time for strategy discussions and allows the players to use the rest room, without dragging out the running time of the game.

4) **Time Between Games**. Each team will have 10 minutes to warm up **before its first game of the day**. After that, at the conclusion of each game, the two teams playing the next game can access the court immediately to begin warm-ups and the clock operator will set the clock at 7 minutes and start it running. Within 2 minutes, coaches and players from the teams playing the previous game must fully exit the bench area so that, at the 5 minute mark, both teams playing the next game will be able to have complete access to their bench. The next game begins after the 7 minute intermission, even if that means commencing the game before its scheduled start. In those cases where the meet is behind schedule, the clock operator will run off only 5 minutes between games and the referee will encourage the players and coaches from the previous game to exit the court immediately.

5) **Checking in at the Scorer's Table**. Each player going into the game must first check in at the scorer's table.

6) **Fouls**. Each player will be allowed five personal fouls.

7) **Technical Fouls.** Any time a technical foul is called, the opposing team will **shoot *two* free throws *and* receive the ball out of bounds**. In the case of a double technical, no free throws will be shot, with the ball given to the team that had possession when the double technical was called. If the ball was in the possession of neither team when the double technical was called, the possession arrow will determine which team will receive the ball out of bounds.

   Technical fouls called on a specific player for poor sportsmanship, foul language or the like, will ***not*** be counted as a personal foul. Any player or coach receiving two technical fouls will be disqualified from the game. A disqualified player may remain seated on the bench, unless he becomes a distraction because of verbal and/or behavioral conduct. A disqualified coach must leave the gymnasium.

If a coach or a player on the bench instructs or shouts to a player on the court to "foul" an opposing player, this will not automatically constitute an intentional or technical foul. Referees, however, have the option of calling an intentional foul if the fouling player overtly fouls the opponent without making a legitimate play on the ball or the person they are guarding.

8) **Time-Outs**. Each team will be allowed two time-outs per half, one time-out per overtime period, and one time-out in sudden death overtime. Unused time-outs cannot be carried over from one period to the next.

9) **Overtime**. If a game is tied at the end of regulation, the teams will play a 2-minute overtime. If a game is still tied at the end of the first overtime, there will be a 3-point sudden death overtime period, in which the first team to score three points, by whatever means, will win the game. There will be a jump ball at the beginning of each overtime period.

10) **Zone Defenses**. Zone defenses will be allowed in 7th and 8th grade meets, but generally not in 6th and 5th grade meets, except in specific cases described below in the **"6th and 5th Grade Expanded Zone/Press Rule Option"** on page 19. Zone defenses of any kind are prohibited in 4th grade meets.

For purposes of 6th grade, 5th grade and 4th grade meets, a player will be deemed to be playing a zone if they do not come half way out from the basket to the 3-point arc when defending the person they are guarding. If the person being guarded is further away from the basket than the 3-point arc, the defender need only come halfway between the basket and the 3-point arc, not halfway from the basket to the person being guarded. The defender on the weak side (the side of the court opposite the ball) must also come out towards the player being guarded (not the ball), at least halfway between the basket and the arc. When a player on the offensive team below the top of the key (where the 3-point arc intersects the jump circle above each free throw line) drives to the basket, defenders can double-team the ball (or even triple, quadruple, or quintuple team the ball). When that happens, defenders on the weak side have a choice when the ball moves toward the basket – they can guard their man or they can double-team the ball – but they cannot stand in the lane partway in between and play a spot on the floor. A good switching, double-teaming defense is generally not illegal; a team that sets up to play a spot on the floor, rather than a specific opponent, will be violating this rule.

In 4th grade meets, and in 6th and 5th grade meets where a full court press is not allowed, when the ball is being brought over the half court line by the offensive team, the defensive team cannot double team the ball above the top of the key, unless the offensive team first brings up a player to set a pick for the ballhandler, in which case both defensive players (the one guarding the ballhandler and the other guarding the player setting the pick) can double team the ballhandler.

11) **Pressing**.

- Full court and half court person-to-person and zone presses are generally allowed in 7th and 8th grade meets.
- Full court person-to-person ***or full court zone presses*** will be allowed in 6th grade boys and girls meets only in the third and fourth quarters and at any time in overtime.
- Full court person-to-person ***or full court zone presses*** will be allowed in 5th grade boys and girls meets only in the fourth quarter and at any time in overtime.
- Full court pressure of any kind is prohibited in 4th grade meets.

During those times when a press cannot be used, players returning to their defensive positions at the other end of the court must not challenge the dribbler or attempt to intercept a direct pass; defenders can, however, pick up a loose ball or muffed pass. At any of the grade levels, any time a team is ahead of its opponent by more than 15 points, it will no longer be allowed to press full court. If a team violates this rule, it will receive a warning at the time of the first violation, after which a technical foul will be assessed against the bench on each subsequent occurrence.

In 6th grade, 5th grade and 4th grade meets, half court zone presses (such as the 1-3-1, or any other half-court trap) are prohibited at any time.

In those situations where pressing is not allowed, if a player in-bounding the ball under an opponent's basket, rolls the ball to half court so as not to start the clock until the recipient of the pass catches the ball (usually done at the

end of the quarter with several seconds left on the clock to get off a long, last-second shot), the defensive player cannot cross the half court line and attempt to intercept the rolled ball. The rationale for taking the opposite position and saying that the defensive player should be allowed to attempt to pick up the ball is that since the ball is not being dribbled or passed directly (i.e., in the air or on one bounce) to the recipient, that the ball is "loose" and can be picked up by either team. Since both of the above statements are logically true, players and referees should be instructed to address this situation as follows:

- If all the defensive players have crossed half court and are in their opponent's offensive side of the court, they are not allowed to cross half court to challenge a rolled pass (in those situations where pressing is not allowed).
- If the defensive players have not crossed the half court line, the offensive player in-bounding the ball should:
  - First, ask the referee not to hand them the ball until the defensive players have cleared half court, or
  - Second, the player should pass the ball to the recipient at half court in the air, or on one bounce, so that the defensive player cannot consider the ball to be "loose" and, therefore, under our rules, is not allowed to attempt an interception.

12) **6th and 5th Grade <u>Expanded</u> Zone/Press Rule Option.** Some 6th and 5th grade coaches, particularly those coaching stronger teams, would like to occasionally be able to play zone defenses generally, and press at any time, during the game when there is a point margin of less than 16. This challenges their players and helps prepare them for tournaments like the Wisconsin State Invitational Championship Tournament where all zones and presses can be used at any time.

As a result, in **every** game for 6th and 5th grade teams, the coaches of the two teams will have the option of discussing the use of one or both of these defenses being used for the entire game (rather than pressing only for portions of the game and no half-court zones) and will communicate that decision to the referees. That decision must be made **before** the game begins and will remain in place throughout the entire game, even if one or both team's coaches change their mind during play. **If coaches choose not to expand pressing and zones to the entire game, then regular League Rules will apply** (<u>pressing only in the third and fourth quarters for 6th grade teams and in the fourth quarter of 5th grade games</u>).

13) **Conduct and Game/Meet Ejections**. Players, coaches, parents and others who use profanity; are demonstrative or loud in their criticism of the referees; taunt, use noisemakers, cowbells, whistles or laser lights to distract opposing players, particularly when shooting a free throw; or are in any way belligerent, will be dealt with assertively. The referees should not confront a player, parent or other relevant party in the stands. **Coaches are responsible for the conduct of all of their fans.** The referee will identify for the coach the offending party and the nature of the offense. There will be one warning. If there is a second incident, a technical foul will be called. If the conduct persists, the offending individual or individuals will be instructed by the relevant coach to leave the gym. That person will then be given two minutes to leave the gym; failure to do so will result in the team involved forfeiting the game. The referees involved in officiating the game in question, or the meet director, will make a telephonic report to the League to consider further action against the expelled player, coach or fan. To help set expectations about player, parent and coach conduct, many basketball associations have all three parties sign a Code of Conduct – a sample of such a code can be seen in Attachment #8 to these Rules.

If a coach or fan is ejected from a game early in the meet, it will be for that game only, not the entire meet. The same is true for a player. However, in the case of an adult, if the conduct involved a physical threat of harm, battery (a punch or a push), or necessitated a call to the police, that coach or fan will be ejected for the remainder of the meet. For a player, where a certain amount of untoward physical contact (i.e., elbowing) is going to take place, expulsion for the remainder of the meet will only take place where the battery was premeditated and demonstrative (e.g., a thrown punch). The referees make all decisions regarding single game ejections; decisions in full meet ejections are made by the Meet Director in consultation with the game referee.

14) **Fifth and Fourth Grade 13 Foot Free Throw Line**. At 5th and 4th grade boys and girls meets, meet organizers will put a piece of tape 13 feet from the basket in the center of the lane to act as the free throw shooting line. Through normal wear and tear, this line needs to be replaced periodically throughout the day. Fifth and fourth grade players have the choice of lining up behind the 13 foot line, behind the 15 foot line, or are even allowed to stand on top of the 15 foot line, so long as they do not cross the 13 foot line before the ball is above the cylinder.

15) **Official Score.** ***The score posted on the scoreboard will take precedence over what is posted in anyone's scorebook, including the official scorer's book.*** Teams should watch the score as posted on the scoreboard and a coach (not the scorekeeper) must ***immediately*** get the referee's attention if a score has been posted incorrectly. The referee, talking to the official scorer and the coaches, must stop the game and try to decipher the error and correct it on the scoreboard. While the official scorer's book should be consulted, it should not be viewed as controlling if, in the mind of the referees, it may not be an accurate reflection of what the score should be. A team's coach will not be allowed to present "evidence" from their scorebook at the end of the period, during a time-out or at an appreciable time (i.e., several minutes or more) after a score was supposedly mis-posted. Most meets use volunteer scorekeepers and mistakes will occur. These must be objected to immediately or not at all. Bottom line: the score on the electronic board controls – not the score in the official scorebook – and errors on the electronic board must be objected to within a short time (a minute or less) of being posted or it must not be changed by the scorer or the referee.

16) **No Shoot Arounds.** Meet directors and referees are asked to aggressively monitor the use of basketballs at each meet by anyone not on the roster of a team currently involved in a game. A coach from either participant team can appeal to the referees to take action during the game or before the game proceeds. The following activities are specifically prohibited:

a. Players of other teams (not in the current game) and other kids (older or younger) should not be allowed to have a basketball in their hands in the stands or along the sidelines. If they do, it's inevitable that a ball will roll out on the court during a game, risking injury.

b. Players of other teams (not in the current game), other kids, and the referees, clock operators and scorekeepers, are ***prohibited from shooting baskets at either main basket or any side basket*** between periods, during time-outs or between games.

It is no more appropriate to shoot baskets during a break in the action at a League meet than it would be at a WIAA game. For liability purposes, this is a serious issue. Hosts who ignore it will have their hosting privileges curtailed in future years if multiple complaints are received from visiting teams.

17) **Uniform Jerseys.** Jerseys for all teams must have numbers on both front and back. It **is permissible** to have a number on a jersey with a digit greater than 5. (As a side note, the NFHS explains that the reason for basketball jerseys having digits of 5 or lower is so referees can easily signal a call with one hand and be understood by the score table. For example, the number “6” would have to be called with five fingers and one finger, which could also be interpreted as “51.”) It is **not** permissible to have more than one player wear the same jersey number.

Teams that wear jerseys which are **not reversible** must bring an alternate numbered jersey, T-shirt or a transparent mesh vest of a different color that allows the referee to see the number of each player.

Where both teams want to wear the same color in a game, the referees will conduct a coin flip as far in advance of tip-off as possible. If the team losing the coin flip does not have an alternate jersey with them, but the team that won the coin flip does, the latter team will be required to put on their alternate jersey, with the team that lost the flip assessed a bench technical. The team that switches jerseys then will start the game by shooting two free throws and getting the ball out of bounds (i.e., there will be no opening game tip-off).

18) **Bench Selection and Maintenance.** At some meets, teams and coaches disagree about who gets to sit at which bench. Therefore, bench selection will be prioritized as follows:

- The host team(s) always gets first choice.
- Where both teams are visiting teams, the choices will be done alphabetically:
  - On even numbered days, the team having first choice will be the community/school name (not mascot) nearest the first letter of the alphabet (alphabetically, A to Z).
  - On odd numbered days, the team having first choice will be the community/school name (not mascot) nearest the end of the alphabet (reverse alphabetical, Z to A).

The head coach of each team is responsible for fully cleaning up his/her bench area after each game in a timely fashion. That includes:

- Getting all equipment, clothing, gear, players and fans away from the bench area within two minutes after their game is completed.
- Removing all water bottles, sports drink bottles, whether empty or not from underneath the bench or chairs, or immediately behind the chair or bench. That includes the removal of any such bottles from the previous games. To avoid having to clean up another team's mess, remind the previous occupant of that bench of their responsibility to clean up (if they don't, file a complaint with the League).
- All puddles of water, sports drink, etc., must be wiped up with a towel or toweling before vacating that bench.

Tie Breakers. There are two separate tie breaker procedures:

- for meets with four teams in each bracket, where all teams played each other, and
- for five, six and seven team meets, where poolmates involved in the tie did not all play each other.

These are the same tie breaker rules that are employed at the Wisconsin State Invitational Championship Tournaments.

While both tie breaker methods apply the same general principles, there are some significant differences in their application. First, we'll define some terminology common to both approaches:

- "Overall record" or "overall pool record" – this is the final win/loss record of a team after pool play is completed.
- "Head-to-head" competition – this is the result of the game(s) between one or more teams. In four team meets, all teams being compared played each other in pool play. In five, six and seven team meets, some of the teams involved in a tie may have played each other, while others haven't.
- "Net tie breaker points" – each team earns (or loses) points based on how they fared in ***each*** game against ***each*** opponent. A team losing a game by 7 will receive a -7 score. A team winning a game by 11 points will receive a +11 score. All plus and minus points will be capped at ***15*** so that no team has an incentive to run up the score (past 15 points) on a weaker team.
- "Fewest defensive points" – this is the total number of points scored by opposing teams in all games.
- "Most points scored" – this is the total number of points scored by a team in all games.

In the rare occasion when a team does not play one of its scheduled pool games, a forfeit is recorded with the forfeiting team losing by a score of 15-0 for tie breaker purposes, unless the forfeiting team starts a game but walks out before it is completed, in which case the score will be recorded as the actual score once play was suspended. (If the team that walks out is winning the game in question, a loss will be recorded for the team that walked out by a score of 15-0.)

Tie breaker procedures for meets in which all poolmates play each other (four-team brackets). After pool play is completed, the teams being ranked are seeded using the following five criteria, in this order:

1. Overall pool record.
2. Where two teams tie that have an identical pool record, the winner of the head-to-head match-up wins the tie breaker.
3. Where three teams tie, the team with the **most** net tie breaker points gets the **top seed**.
   After taking out the top seed, only **two** teams remain tied by pool record, **the team that won the head-to-head matchup between those two teams will get the higher remaining seed.** If all three teams are still tied, because they have the same number of net tie breaker points, go to criterion 4.
4. Fewest defensive points given up in all games.
5. Most points scored in all games.

For an illustration of how the four-team tie breaker rule works, see the results in Rule C-8, Option 1 (page 12).

- In Bracket 2, all four teams have different win/loss records. However, note that even though Detroit (+11) has more points than Miami (+4), Miami finishes second because it has a 2-1 record and Detroit finishes third because it was only 1-2. In other words, as noted above, the win/loss record within the group takes precedence over any other aspect of the tie breaker rule.
- In Bracket 1, Los Angeles takes first place based on their 3-0 pool record. With three teams tied with 1-2 records, Houston finishes second, because it has the highest total net tie breaker points (-8). Between New York and Chicago, New York is awarded third place because, even though New York had fewer tie breaker points than Chicago (-21 v. -12), New York defeated Chicago in head-to-head competition.

Tie breaker procedures for meets where teams did *not* necessarily play all other teams (five, six or seven team meets). After play is completed, the teams being ranked are seeded using the following seven criteria, in this order:

1. Overall record.
2. Where two teams that played head-to-head have an identical play record, the winner of the head-to-head match-up wins the tie breaker.
3. Where three teams tie and one of the teams defeated the other two, that victorious team gets the highest seed of the three teams involved in the tie. If the two remaining teams played each other in pool play, go back to #2, otherwise proceed to #5.
4. Where three teams tie and one of the teams lost to the other two, that losing team gets the lowest seed of the three teams involved in the tie (if the two remaining teams played each other in pool play, go back to #2, otherwise proceed to #5).
5. Where two teams tie that did not play each other, or where three or more teams tie where one team did not defeat or lose to all the other teams involved in the tie, the next tie breaker is highest net tie breaker points. If after identifying the tie breaker winner, the remaining teams that are still tied by pool record did not play each other, continue to use the highest net tie breaker points. However, if the remaining teams that are still tied by pool record did play each other, go back to #2. If teams are also tied by net tie breaker points, proceed to #6.
6. If still tied, the next tie breaker is fewest defensive points given up to opposing teams in all games.
7. If still tied, the next tie breaker is most points scored (most offensive) in all games.

For an illustration of how the five, six or seven team tie breaker works, see Rule C-8, Option 2 (page 13). Note that if a meet has only seven teams, it has been reformatted whereas a six-team meet can be a regularly scheduled three game meet, or a reformatted meet. Option 2 shows a regularly scheduled six team meet. With a 3-0 record, Atlanta takes first place. Edmonton takes second place with a 2-1 record. There are now four teams tied with a 1-2 record. Since there are four teams in this tie, none of them could have lost or won against all of the other teams, so the first team to take out of the 4-way tie is Denver with the highest tie-breaker points of +8; Denver takes third place. There are now three teams tied at 1-2, we again look at whether any of these lost or won against the other two. This did not happen, so the team with the next highest tie-breaker points, Baltimore (-1) takes fourth place. There are now two teams tied at 1-2 - - since these two teams did play each other, point differential is not considered and we look at head-to-head competition - - Cleveland defeated Fargo, so Cleveland finishes 5th and Fargo finishes 6th. Because there are only two teams that remain in the tie, the fact that Cleveland has -16 tie-breaker points and Fargo has only -12 tie-breaker points is not relevant; **once the tie is down to two teams, head-to-head is always the deciding factor.**

The biggest challenge we hear to the tie-breaker procedure (usually from parents) is that in a three-way tie, we should use the tie-breaker points to decide the places for all three teams, as we did years ago. However, the majority of veteran coaches agree that head-to-head competition is the best way of deciding “places.” Since head-to-head competition obviously cannot be used to break a three-way tie, we must have a procedure in place to **break the three-way tie**, then we ***always return to head-to-head competition***, with which team gets the second highest and third highest place determined by ***head-to-head results*** (not net tie breaker points).