

5.2 MODIFIED RULES IN COMPETITIONS

There are a number of rule modifications that should be considered with Mini-Basketball players.

These modifications can help to:

- Ensure that all players are involved in the play, not just “dominant” players;
- The focus is on Fun;
- That all players get to experience “success” (e.g. being able to perform a skill), regardless of whether or not their team won or lost.

EQUIPMENT

- Vary the height of the basket if possible - standard height is 10' (3.05m)
 - U10 – 8' high (2.43m)
 - U6 – 6' high (1.83m)
- If the height of the basket cannot be varied, consider giving points for shots that hit the ring, the backboard and/or the net.
- The size of the ball should be varied:
 - U12 – Size 5
 - U8 – Softer size 5 ball
 - U6 – Size 3

COURT

If possible, the size of the court should be varied for players under the age of 8. Having baskets at either side of the court enables the game to be played across the court instead of along the full length of the court.

If playing across the court is not possible, playing the game in the half court can be also be effective if a portable basket can be placed at half way as this can also allow for more games to be played at the one time.

The downfall of playing a half court game with only one basket is that players lose the transition from offence to defence that is inherent in the “full court” game.

Accordingly, playing in the half court with one basket is not preferred, unless necessary to enable more games to be played at once.

SUBSTITUTIONS

- All players in Mini-Basketball must play in, at least, each half of each game. Other rules that should be considered are:
 - Stopping the game half way through each quarter for a mandatory substitution
 - Players that score 10 points are substituted off (but are allowed to come back on)
 - Players are not “fouled out” if they have 5 fouls, they may continue in the game. However, if a player is being too rough, the referees may substitute them off.
 - Allowing substitutions to be done whilst the game is being played rather than having to wait for a break in play. Alternatively, let the referee stop the game at any time for a substitution.

SCORING

The following rules should be considered

- Shots from outside the 3pt line only count for 2 points (young players often don't have the technique or strength to shoot from distance) – this removes the “incentive” for shooting long shots. To really discourage players shooting from this range, it could be made to count for only 1 point or not count at all.
- Shots from inside the keyway may count for 3 points and shots outside the keyway count for 2 points
- A shot that is made after 5 passes is worth 3 points

- At quarter, half and three-quarter time, any player that has not scored, takes one or two free throws which count towards the team's score if made
- A player taking an offensive rebound must pass to a team mate that is outside the keyway before the team can take a shot
- A player that is fouled while shooting, is awarded one point and the team get the ball back from half way. No free throw is taken.

RULE VARIATIONS

It is not suggested that all of these variations be made, however consideration should be given as to how to make the games enjoyable and engaging for all players.

- "No grab" Rule. Defensive players are not allowed to grab the ball out of the hands of another player. Defensive players may steal passes in the air.
- "Fast Break and Possession". A team that scores a basket on a fast break gets those points and then gets the ball back at half way.
- Zone defence should not be allowed until the U16 age group.
- The shot clock should not be introduced until the U14 age group. In the U14 age group, the shot clock does not start until the offensive team has possession of the ball in their front court (giving them a maximum of 32 seconds).
- "No Double Team". Only one person can guard the player that has the ball.
- In U10, the travel and illegal dribble rules should be applied sparingly. Instead, referees should give feedback to players about their footwork, even stopping the play to tell them that they committed a violation, but then awarding that team the ball back.
- "No 5 Second". No 5 second violation is called and instead, the whistle is blown and the offensive team are given the ball to throw in.
- "No Throw In". Instead of teams throwing the ball in from the sideline, the player with the ball stands in the middle of the court. They must pass the ball and cannot dribble.
- "No 8 Second". — No 8 second violation (when the offence has not moved the ball into their front court) is called. Instead, the time can be extended or the whistle is blown (so that players become aware of the rule) but the team retains the ball, with a throw in from half way.
- "Pass before a Shot". This is a common rule used in practices but can also be included in the games. A team must have passed the ball a minimum number of times (1-3 times) before being able to attempt a shot. This stops the temptation for players to rebound the ball and then dribble full court without looking for team mates. The rule can also be applied on an offensive rebound, or a player that takes an offensive rebound can be allowed to shoot straight away.
- "Points for a Pass". A team is awarded 1 point for passing the ball to a player that is in the key. Or a team may be awarded 1 point if a shot is taken after a player caught a pass.
- "Don't Guard the Throw In". Instead of being able to stand in front and defend the person throwing the ball in, their defender must stand next to them. Once the ball has been passed, both the passer and their defender step into the court and play normally.