

Special Olympics Northern California

Basketball



2026 Rules & Guidelines

Team Competition and Individual Skills Contest

(Please Review Page 20 for 2026 Rule Changes for Basketball)



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SPECIAL OLYMPICS NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide athletic opportunities to children and adults with intellectual disabilities which instill the confidence needed to succeed in life.

Preparing for life through sports

SONORCAL PLAYS BY THE RULES.....

All Special Olympics competitions will be conducted in accordance with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules and the National Governing Body of rules for each sport offered in our program. These rules are designed to protect the Athletes, provide equitable conditions of competition and promote uniformity so that no competitor shall obtain an unfair advantage over another.

Special Olympics Northern California

COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT

Special Olympics Northern California (SONorCal) volunteer coaches are models whose behavior should serve as a positive example for their athletes. Their behavior should reflect a concern that the fairest and most positive competitive experience is equally available to every Special Olympics athlete in each training or competition. The coach has the unique opportunity to influence the development and personal growth of many individuals. For this reason, it is important that the coach adhere to the standards of ethical decision making and teaching. In addition, it is the position of SONorCal that each volunteer coach shall agree to:

HAVE RESPECT FOR OTHERS

- I will respect the rights, dignity and worth of athletes, other coaches and volunteers, SONorCal staff members, and friends and spectators in Special Olympics.
- I will treat everyone equally regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability.
- I will be a positive role model for the athletes I coach.

ENSURE A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE

- I will ensure that for each athlete I coach, the time spent with Special Olympics is a positive experience.
- I will respect the talent, developmental stage and goals of each athlete.
- I will ensure each athlete competes in events that challenge that athlete's potential and are appropriate to that athlete's ability.
- I will be fair, considerate and honest with athletes and communicate with athletes using simple, clear language.
- I will ensure that accurate scores are provided for entry of an athlete into any event.
- I will instruct each athlete to perform to the best of the athlete's ability at all preliminaries/heats and finals in accordance with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules.

ACT PROFESSIONALLY AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS/HER ACTIONS

- My language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation will demonstrate high standards.
- I will dress and act in an appropriate manner at all times.
- I will display control, respect, dignity and professionalism to all involved in Special Olympics, including to the athletes, other coaches and volunteers, opponents, officials, administrators, SONorCal staff members, parents, spectators and the media.
- I will encourage athletes to demonstrate the same qualities.
- I will not drink alcohol, smoke or take illegal drugs while representing Special Olympics at training sessions or during competitions.
- I will not engage in any form of personal abuse towards, or inappropriate contact or relationship with, athletes, other coaches and volunteers, SONorCal staff members, family members, or spectators in Special Olympics, including verbal, physical or emotional abuse.
- I will be alert to any form of abuse from other sources directed toward athletes or others in my care.
- I will abide by the Special Olympics policy that prohibits coaches/volunteers from dating athletes.

PROVIDE QUALITY SERVICE TO THE ATHLETES

- I will seek continued improvement through performance evaluation and ongoing coach education.
- I will be knowledgeable about the Sports Rules and skills of the sport(s) I coach.
- I will provide a planned training program.
- I will keep copies of the registration, training, and competition records for each athlete I coach.
- I will follow the Special Olympics and National Governing Body rules for my sport(s) coached, as well as all SONorCal policies and procedures as amended.

ENSURE THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF THE ATHLETES

- I will ensure that the equipment and facilities for my sport(s) coached are safe to use.
- I will ensure that the equipment, rules, training and the environment are appropriate for the age and ability of the athletes.
- I will review each athlete's registration form and be aware of any limitations on that athlete's participation noted on that form.
- I will encourage athletes, coaches and volunteers to seek medical advice when needed.
- I will report any emergencies to the appropriate authorities after first taking immediate action to ensure the safety and well-being of those involved.
- I will maintain the same interest and support towards sick and injured athletes.
- I will allow further participation in training and competition only when appropriate.

Should the behaviors and/or abilities of any volunteer coach or other faction of a school/organization violate either the principles stated above (including the SONorCal policies and procedures as amended) or the philosophy of the Special Olympics movement, then any of the following actions may be taken by SONorCal in its sole discretion:

1. The coach may be notified by official warning of the undesirable behavior and be requested to remedy the situation immediately in order to continue his or her participation in Special Olympics;
2. The coach may be requested to withdraw personally or with his/her team from the remainder of any Special Olympics event or competition;
3. The coach or sponsoring school/organization may be suspended from participating in any or all Special Olympics activities or events for a specified period of time; and/or
4. The coach or sponsoring school/organization may be permanently prohibited from participating in any or all Special Olympics activities or events.

Special Olympics Northern California

ATHLETES CODE OF CONDUCT

Special Olympics Northern California (SONorCal) is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all athletes to honor sports and Special Olympics. All SONorCal Athletes and Unified Partners agree to the following code:

SPORTSMANSHIP

- I will practice good sportsmanship.
- I will act in ways that bring respect to me, my coaches, my team, and Special Olympics.
- I will not use bad language.
- I will not swear or insult other persons.
- I will not fight with other athletes, coaches, volunteers, or staff.

TRAINING AND COMPETITION

- I will train regularly.
- I will learn and follow the rules of my sport.
- I will listen to my coaches and the official and ask questions when I do not understand
- I will always try my best during training, divisioning, and competitions.
- I will not “hold back” in preliminary competition just to get into an easier finals competition division.
- I will follow the International Federation and the National Federation/Governing Body rules for my sport(s).

RESPONSIBILITY FOR MY ACTIONS

- I will not make inappropriate or unwanted physical, verbal, or sexual advances on others.
- I will not use any alcohol or tobacco products, vaping products, or cannabis products while representing Special Olympics at training sessions, competition, or during Games.
- I will not take drugs for the purpose of improving my performance.
- I will obey all laws and Special Olympics rules.
- If I exhibit behavior that violates the code of conduct, I may face disciplinary actions, which could include a warning letter, a suspension, or an expulsion.

Special Olympics Northern California

PARENT AND SPECTATOR CODE OF CONDUCT

Special Olympics Northern California (SONorCal) is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all parents and spectators to honor sport and Special Olympics. All Special Olympics parents and spectators should observe the following code:

- Remember athletes are participating for their enjoyment. Encourage participation, but do not force it.
- Applaud good performances and efforts from all individuals and teams. Congratulate all participants on their performance, regardless of the event's or game's outcome.
- Focus on the athletes' effort and performance, rather than whether they win or lose.
- Encourage athletes to play according to the rules and to settle disagreements without resorting to hostility or violence.
- Never ridicule or yell at participants for making a mistake or losing the competition.
- Remember that athletes learn best by example. Appreciate good performance and skillful plays by all participants.
- Respect the decisions of officials, Games Management Team and Staff, and teach athletes to do the same.
- Show appreciation for event volunteers, coaches, and officials and staff. (Remember, without them there would be no opportunities for athletes).
- Condemn the use of violence in any form, whether it is by spectators, coaches, officials or players.
- Show respect for your team's or individual's opponents. Without them, there would be no event or game.
- Encourage athletes and coaches to follow the rules and the officials' decisions.
- Swearing and/or inappropriate language will not be tolerated at SONorCal events
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background or religion.
- Abide by all posted and written policies, including SONorCal's Animal Policy for Practices, Competitions and Events.

By attending an event, parents and spectators have agreed to abide by this Parent and Spectator Code of Conduct. SO NorCal reserves the right to dismiss parents and/or spectators from any SO NorCal event for violation of this Parent and Spectator Code of Conduct.

DIVISIONING CRITERIA

Basketball is a team sport and teams will be divisioned based on total team composition.

USE THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA KEEPING YOUR FIVE BEST PLAYERS IN MIND.

	Understanding of Rules & Concepts	Offensive Ability	Defensive Ability	Physical Ability	Ball Handling
Level 2	High understanding of rules and violations. Can play by high school rules. Can run set plays on regular possession as well as inbound plays. Understand boxing out and rebounding. Understand game score at most times.	Most players are capable of scoring. Move without the ball. Can take shots while moving. Can shoot from 3-point arc with average success. Can break full-court pressure regularly.	Can play zone and man defense. Understand more than one defensive position. Can apply full-court pressure.	High physical ability. Ability to run up and down full court with few stops in action. Ability to jump for rebounds and block shots. Quick reaction time.	Can control ball off of offensive or defensive rebound. Can dribble around defenders. Lead teammates with passes. Catch passes thrown to a spot.
Level 3	Basic understanding of most rules and violations. Can run basic set plays. Understand positions on court for offense and defense. Understand use of jump ball and alternating possessions.	2-4 players make majority of baskets from various spots on the floor. Can shoot from 3-point arc with some success. Can break full-court pressure frequently.	Can play zone and man defense. Most players understand more than one defensive position. Can apply full-court pressure.	Moderate to high physical ability. Ability to run up and down full court with frequent stops in action. May box out on rebounds. Ability to jump for most rebounds and block some shots.	Most players can control ball off of defensive rebound. Few offensive rebounds. Most players can dribble while guarding ball. Passes to open, stationary, teammates.
Level 4	Limited understanding of most rules such as boundary lines, obvious traveling and double dribbling. Can line up for free throws with some assistance. Low to moderate understanding of change of possession and jump balls. Ability to inbound ball with some assistance.	1-2 players make majority of baskets. Shoot when not guarded. Very few shot attempts from 3-point arc with limited success.	Play one defensive spot on floor or in one defensive zone. Some can play man defense. Can't play full-court pressure.	Low to moderate physical ability. Few players can run occasional fast breaks. Rebounds are caught with feet on the floor.	Few athletes are able to dribble when guarded. Some shuffling of feet and traveling. Passes to teammates, even if not open.
Level 5	Low understanding of rules and concepts. Need assistance with inbounds plays, free throws and direction of play. No set plays. Need significant amount of verbal coaching. No understanding of change of possession or jump balls.	All players shoot without discretion. Very few points scored. Takes time to decide to pass to open teammate. Very few shots from outside of key.	Plays a spot on the floor rather than a position. Doesn't go after ball unless it comes near.	Low physical ability, but have mastered Individual Skills Contest events and are ready to transition to team play. Most balls are walked up court on offense. Rebounds bounce several times before being controlled.	1-2 players are able to dribble ball into frontcourt. Stops dribble when closely guarded. Passes are made once ball-handler is guarded.

SONORCAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Official Special Olympics Rules shall govern all Special Olympics Basketball competitions. As an International sports program, Special Olympics has created these rules based upon The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) for Basketball. NFHS rules shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules. In such cases, the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules shall apply.

SECTION A - GENERAL RULES

1. Each Special Olympics athlete is required to have an Application for Participation on file in order to participate. This is in accordance with Special Olympics General Rules.
2. Each team is required to play all team members in every game played.
3. SONorCal has a strict Animal Policy for Practices, Competitions and Events, which must be followed by all athletes, volunteers, parents and spectators at all times. Please visit sonc.org/resources/coach-athletes-resources for the full policy.

SECTION B - OFFICIAL EVENTS

The following are Official Basketball Events offered by SONorCal:

1. Traditional 5-A-Side
2. Individual Skills Competition (ISC)

SECTION C - DIVISIONS

1. Competitors in basketball will compete in an open age and open gender group.
2. Within this group, there will be four Levels:
 - Level 2 - Regulation Rules
 - Level 3 - Regulation Rules
 - Level 4 - Adaptive Rules (See Sections H and J)
 - Level 5 - Adaptive Rules (See Sections H and J)
3. Teams will be divisioned according to:
 - a. Previous year's tournament results.
 - b. Local invitational and scrimmage results.
 - c. Mandatory submission of leveling videos (one per 5-A-Side team being registered).
 - d. Other requirements, as determined by Competition Director and Games Rules Committee.

SECTION D - GAME ROSTER

1. Regional Entry Form (Registration Information due prior to tournament):
 - a. A Regional Entry Form must contain a minimum of six players and a maximum of 12 players **for Traditional 5-A-Side play**. All coaches must also be listed on the Regional Entry Form.
 - b. **All coaches must also be listed on the Regional Entry Form, with a maximum of three (3) per roster for Levels 2, 3 and 4. Level 5 teams may have a maximum of four (4) coaches per roster. All coaches, including the baseline coach for Level 5, will be required to pick up a game pass from the official scorekeeper or court manager, which must be worn and visible at all times for the duration of the game, while on the bench (and for the baseline coach for Level 5). Passes must be returned to the pickup location following the conclusion of the game. Only those displaying a valid coach pass will be allowed in team areas. Coach passes are in addition to any other issues identification for the competition (e.g., wristbands).**
 - c. Regional Entry Forms are considered frozen when submitted to the Games Director at the time that Registration Information is due. The Program office must approve any requests for a roster change.
2. Official Game Roster (Players from Regional Entry Form that are present for competition):

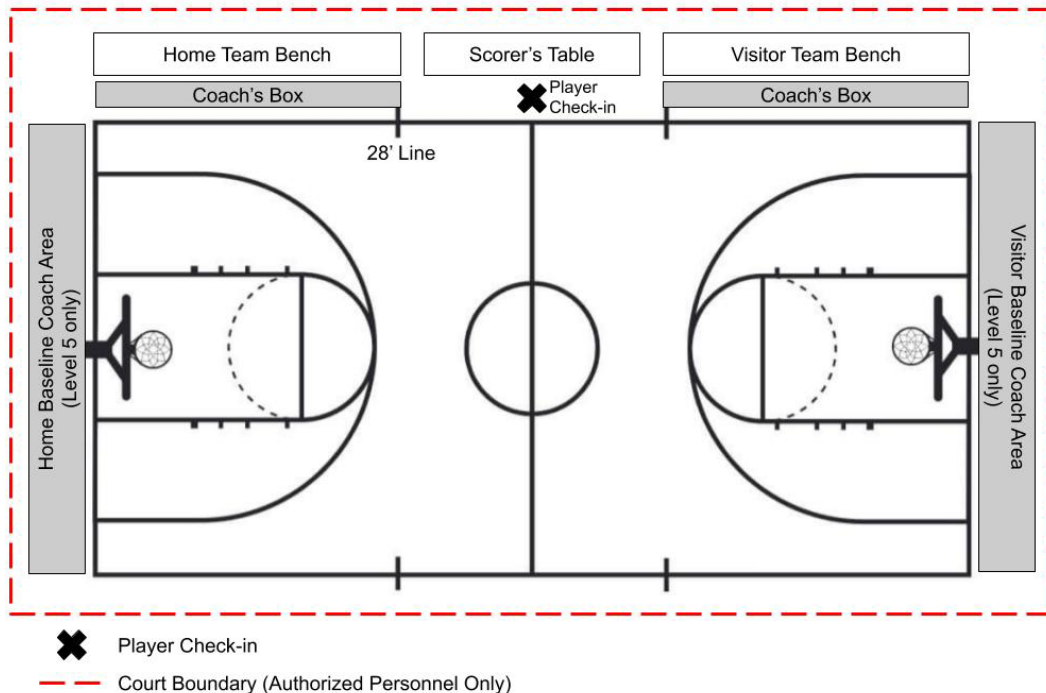
- a. For any given game, each team must submit the Basketball Scoresheet to the official scorekeeper. Only players who are listed on the Regional Entry Form may be listed on the Basketball Scoresheet. The head coach must also be listed on the Basketball Scoresheet. Failure to list a player on the Basketball Scoresheet will result in a technical foul.
- b. A team must have at least four (4) players from the Official Game Roster on the court to start any given game. Once the game begins, a team may play with as few as one (1) player if additional players are unavailable due to injury or disqualification (foul out or ejection).

SECTION E - COACHES AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Coaches shall remain within the designated “coach’s box” (typically located on the same side as the scorer’s table and team benches, beginning at the baseline and extending 28 feet towards the mid-court line (or shorter if the view of the game from the scorer’s table is obstructed or has been designated otherwise by the Games Director)) while the game is in progress. See Diagram E.1. **Only the head coach may stand during game play and all other coaches must remain seated (NFHS Rule), with the exception of the Baseline Coach in Level 5, who may also stand during game play.**
 - a. 1st offense - Warning
 - b. 2nd offense - Technical foul
2. No extra personnel outside of registered athletes and game officials are allowed on the court during competition.
3. Coaches will be allowed to accompany a player to the scorer’s table when substituting.
4. For Level 5 only, each team may designate one registered coach to be the “Baseline Coach” (must appear on the competition registration form for the particular team) to be positioned on the baseline, from one sideline to the other, on the same side as their team bench. This coach may only provide verbal queues from beyond the boundary of the court (see Diagram E.1).
5. Coaches are responsible for knowing and understanding the rules of the game, not only the modified rules in this manual, but also the National Governing Body Basketball Rules. The National Governing Body of rules for Special Olympics Basketball is National Federation of State High School Associations, (NFHS). To acquire your own NFHS Rule Book, visit:

nfhs.org/sports/basketball/rules

Diagram E.1



SECTION F - UNIFORMS

In instances of non-modified uniform violations, NFHS rules will be enforced.

1. All members of a team must wear the same color uniform, which will consist of shorts and a tank top or sleeved shirt. Pants of any type, including jeans, are strongly discouraged, but if worn, must match as a team. If a T-shirt is worn under a tank top, team members should wear matching colors.
2. All players must wear numbered uniforms. Uniforms must have a smaller number in front and larger number in the back. Numbers can consist of 0-9, the highest number being 99. Please refer to SONorCal uniform standards.
3. All players should wear flat gym, court, or tennis shoes. Encourage your players not to wear black soft-sole shoes, as they will leave black marks on the court.
4. It is recommended that no undergarments or tights, which extend below the pants/shorts, be allowed, except compression shorts which are unadorned and a single color similar to the predominant color of the pants/shorts.
5. Those players who wear eyeglasses while playing are required to wear a strap to hold them in place.
6. No jewelry, head bands or head decorations are allowed. Sweatbands are allowed.
7. Any accessories needed for medical purposes must be approved by the Competition Director prior to competition, during the competition registration process.

SECTION G - EQUIPMENT

1. Special Olympics Basketball calls for the use of NFHS standard basketball equipment including the regulation basketball, baskets, and basket heights.
2. A smaller basketball (28 ½" in circumference and between 18-20 oz. in weight) can be used for both women's and junior (ages 15 and under) competition within the Individual Skills Contest. A standard size ball (29 ½") shall be used for all team play and the men's competition for the Individual Skills Contest.
3. All levels and divisions will play with a regulation 10 ft. goal.

SECTION H - THE GAME

1. In cases not specifically covered by the rules in this manual, the National Governing Body of rules will govern. (National Federation of State High School Associations, NFHS). Referees shall have the power to make all decisions on any point not specifically covered in the rules.
2. The Games Rules Committee shall make all final decisions.
3. **Level 2:** Games will consist of up to four eight (8) minute quarters. The Competition Director will determine the length of game, due to time constraints and number of courts and facilities. The clock will run just as it does in regular high school play – time will stop on all dead ball situations (any whistle indicating the stoppage of play).
 - a. If a team is leading by 35 points or more in the second half, the clock will become a running clock, except for called and officials' timeouts.
 - b. Should the score differential drop below 35 points at any time in the second half, normal clock operation will resume, as described above.
4. **Levels 3, 4, & 5:** Games will consist of up to four eight (8) minute quarters. The Competition Director will determine the length of game, due to time constraints and number of courts and facilities. The clock will be a running clock except for time-outs and the last two minutes of the second and fourth quarters. During these final two minutes, the clock will stop at all dead ball situations (any whistle indicating the stoppage of play).
 - a. If a team is leading by 25 points or more in either half, the clock will remain a running clock during the final two minutes of the second and fourth quarters.
 - b. Should the score differential drop below 25 points at any time, normal clock operation will resume, as described above.
5. There will be a one-minute break between the first and second quarter and between the third and fourth quarter. A minimum five-minute and a maximum 10-minute half-time will be called between the second and third quarters.

6. Each team is entitled to three full (60 seconds) and two 30-second time-outs during a regulation game. Unused time-outs accumulate and may be used at any time in regulation play and overtime. In overtime, each team is entitled to one additional 30-second time-out during each overtime period.
7. Overtime periods will be two minutes in duration with clock stopped at all dead ball situations.
 - a. Round Robin and Pool Play – a maximum of three (3) Overtime periods will be used. In case of a tie after three (3) Overtimes, the game will be deemed a tie.
 - b. Medal Play and Play-in Games – all games will be played out to their entirety.
 - c. Team and personal fouls carry over into the overtime periods.
8. Players must report to the scorer's table and must wait for the referee to motion them onto the court. Substitutions may only occur during a dead ball situation.
9. All levels, except for Level 5, will open the game and any overtime periods with a jump ball at center court. All other jump ball situations will use the alternating possession rule, beginning with the team that failed to control the jump ball at the start of the game. The scorer's table is responsible for keeping track of alternating possessions.
 - a. Level 5 games will open the game and any overtime periods with a coin toss, where the visiting team will make the call and the winner will choose possession.
10. Teams will warm up and start the game shooting at the basket farthest from their team bench. Teams are required to switch baskets at the half.
11. Foul shots will be enforced throughout the game, except for Leveling or Assessment games (see Section K). All foul shots for all levels and divisions will take place at the regulation distance (15' from the free throw line to the backboard).
12. Forfeits will result in a score of (2-0). If there is a forfeit during a divisioning game, it is up to the discretion of the Competition Director to division teams appropriately (the team that forfeited will not necessarily be in a lower division).

SECTION I - PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES

1. A team may start the game with four players. Once the game begins, a team may play with as few as two (2) players if additional players are unavailable due to injury or disqualification (foul out or ejection). If a team drops down to one (1) available player, it will forfeit the game.
2. All players must be ambulatory and no on-court assistance or on-court guidance is allowed for team competition (Levels 2-5).
3. Substitutions may be made any time the referee's whistle is blown to stop play, during time-outs or prior to the beginning of a quarter. Substitutes will report to the scorer's table, who will then notify the referee of substitutions.
4. The coach must submit their line-up to the official scorekeeper at least ten minutes prior to the scheduled game time.
5. Each team is required to play all team members in every game played.

SECTION J - VIOLATIONS

1. **Levels 2 and 3:** Fouls and violations will be called in accordance with NFHS standards.
2. **Levels 4 and 5:** Calling of violations will be relaxed for the lower division games. The following modifications will be allowed:
 - a. The three-second lane will be eased. Officials will look at whether a player is gaining an advantage.
 - b. Players will be allowed continuous one or two hand dribbles with minimal hesitation. Once the ball is picked up and held, the player must shoot or pass. An attempt to dribble again will be a violation (double-dribble).
 - c. Players will be allowed two extra steps in starting or stopping a dribble. A stationary player will be allowed to shuffle his/her feet as long as no offensive advantage is gained. A player may take steps beyond what is allowable. However, if the player scores or escapes the defensive pressure as a result of these extra steps, an advantage has been gained. Therefore, a violation (traveling) is called immediately.
 - d. Backcourt pressure will not be allowed.
 - i. The defensive team must retreat completely to its side of mid-court without attempting defensive resistance.

- ii. Any attempt to guard an offensive player, most importantly, the player with the ball, prior to them completely crossing half court, will be considered pressing.
- iii. The referee will stop play (and null any resulting turnover or fouls), give a warning to the defensive team's bench and coach and award the offensive team possession via an inbound play in the offensive team's backcourt.
- iv. Each team will be allowed two warnings per half.
- v. A third violation will result in a technical foul.
- vi. In the instance of incidental contact with the ball by a defensive player, the referee will stop play and the offensive team will take the ball out of bounds with the defensive team retreating to its' defensive side of mid-court. Incidental contact is not subject to warnings or technical fouls.

SECTION K - FOULS AND PENALTIES

1. There are no adaptations on fouls. All fouls will be called in all levels.
2. Each player will be allowed five fouls per game. The fifth foul will result in removal of that player from the game.
3. The bonus is two free throws for a common foul beginning with the team's fifth foul in each quarter and resets the fouls at the end of each quarter (NFHS 2023 Rule Change).
 - a. During Leveling or Assessment Games, as defined by the Competition Director, no foul shots (bonus or shooting fouls) will be utilized.
 - i. The team that is fouled will receive possession of the ball out of bounds.
 - ii. A defensive foul on a successful field goal attempt will result in the recording of points (2 or 3) and the team that was fouled will receive possession of the ball out of bounds.
4. Technical fouls will be assessed for unsportsmanlike conduct by any coach, player, team attendant or follower. Technical fouls committed by a player or bench personnel shall result in two free throws and ball possession for the offended team. If the foul is flagrant (violent, vulgar, or abusive), two free throws and ball possession shall be awarded and the offender shall be ejected from the game. Any second technical foul committed by a player for the above reasons is considered a flagrant foul and will be treated as such.
 - a. Two technical fouls will result in ejection from the game and suspension for the next game.
 - b. Ejected players are allowed to sit on the team bench for the remainder of the game and any games for which they have been disqualified.
5. Foul Shot (Free Throw) Procedures:
 - a. During a foul shot (Free Throw), lane spaces may be occupied as follows:
 - i. Marked lane spaces may be occupied by a maximum of two offensive players and four defensive players.
 - ii. The first marked lane spaces on each side of the lane, above and adjacent to the first lane-space marks, shall be occupied by opponents of the Free-Throw Shooter. No teammate of the Free-Throw Shooter shall occupy either of these marked lane spaces.
 - iii. The second marked lane spaces on each side may be occupied by teammates of the Free-Throw Shooter.
 - iv. The third marked lane spaces on each side, nearest to the Free-Throw Shooter, may be occupied by the opponent of the Free-Throw Shooter.
 - v. Not more than one player may occupy any part of a marked lane space.
 - vi. For Level 5, only the designated Baseline Coach on that side, along with the game referee(s), may assist with the proper lining up of players, to reduce the amount of time taken for Free Throw(s).
 - b. Any player, other than the Free-Throw Shooter, who does not occupy a marked lane space, must be behind the free-throw line extended and behind the three-point line.
 - c. The free throw(s) awarded because of a personal foul shall be attempted by the offended player. If such player must withdraw because of an injury or disqualification, his/her substitute shall attempt the free throw(s) unless no substitute is available, in which case any teammate may attempt the throw(s) as selected by the team captain or head coach.
 - d. The free throws awarded because of a technical foul may be attempted by any player of the offended team, including eligible substitute or designated starter. The coach or captain shall designate the Free-Throw Shooter.
 - e. After the ball is placed at the disposal of the Free-Throw Shooter:

- i. S/he shall throw/shoot within 10 seconds to cause the ball to enter the basket or touch the ring before the free throw ends.
 - ii. The Free-Throw Shooter shall not fake a try, nor shall any player in a marked lane space fake to cause an opponent to violate.
 - iii. No opponent shall distract the Free-Throw Shooter.
 - iv. The Free-Throw Shooter shall not have either foot beyond the vertical plane of the edge of the free-throw line which is farther from the basket or the free-throw semicircle line until the ball touches the ring or the free throw ends.
 - v. Players occupying and not occupying the marked free-throw line spaces may not enter the free-throw semicircle until the ball touches the ring or until the free throw ends.
4. The game will be forfeited when a team fails to report for play within 10 minutes past the scheduled game time.

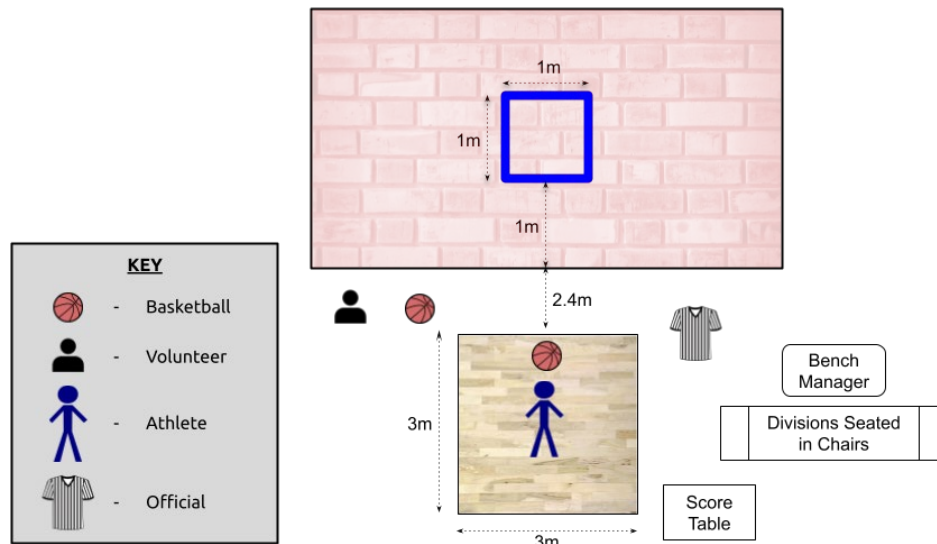
SECTION L - TIE BREAKERS

1. For divisions at a competition where, at the discretion of the Competition Director, places do not need to be determined for advancement purposes (in final division play), the following procedures will take place:
 - a) Head to Head: counting only games between the teams that are tied; if still tied, proceed to b).
 - b) The remaining tied teams will receive the same award (double, triple, etc.) and subsequent places will be skipped.
 - c) Forfeit Rule:
 - i. If any team involved in a tie has forfeited a game (not including divisioning, leveling, or play-in games), it will be placed in the lowest position of the teams involved.
 - ii. If any team involved in a tie received a win as the result of a team forfeiting to them, ALL games involving the team that forfeited will be omitted and the resulting records will be used in the foregoing tiebreaker procedures.
2. For divisions at a competition where, at the discretion of the Competition Director, places need to be determined for advancement purposes (to final divisions, medal or placement games), the following procedures will take place:
 - a) Head to Head: counting only games between the teams that are tied; if still tied proceed to b).
 - b) Lowest total defensive points allowed, counting only games (not including divisioning, leveling, or play-in games) between the teams that are tied; if still tied, proceed to c).
 - c) Highest point differential (difference between points scored and points allowed in each game), counting only games (not including divisioning, leveling or play-in games) between the teams that are tied; if still tied, proceed to d)
 - d) Highest total offensive points scored, counting only games (not including divisioning, leveling, or play-in games) between the teams that are tied; if still tied, proceed to e)
 - e) Lowest total defensive points allowed, counting all games (not including divisioning, leveling, or play-in games) between common opponents; if still tied, proceed to f)
 - f) Highest point differential (difference between points scored and points allowed in each game), counting all games (not including divisioning, leveling or play-in games) between all common opponents; if still tied, proceed to g)
 - g) Highest total offensive points scored, counting all games (not including divisioning, leveling, or play-in games) between common opponents; if still tied, proceed to h)
 - h) If all of the tiebreakers described above still do not decide the outcome of a tie, a coin flip will be used, where the winner will be given the higher placement.
 - i) Forfeit Rule:
 - i. If any team involved in a tie has forfeited a game (not including divisioning, leveling, or play-in games), it will be placed in the lowest position of the teams involved.
 - ii. If any team involved in a tie received a win as the result of a team forfeiting to them, ALL games involving the team that forfeited will be omitted and the resulting records will be used in the foregoing tiebreaker procedures.

SECTION M - INDIVIDUAL SKILLS CONTEST (ISC)

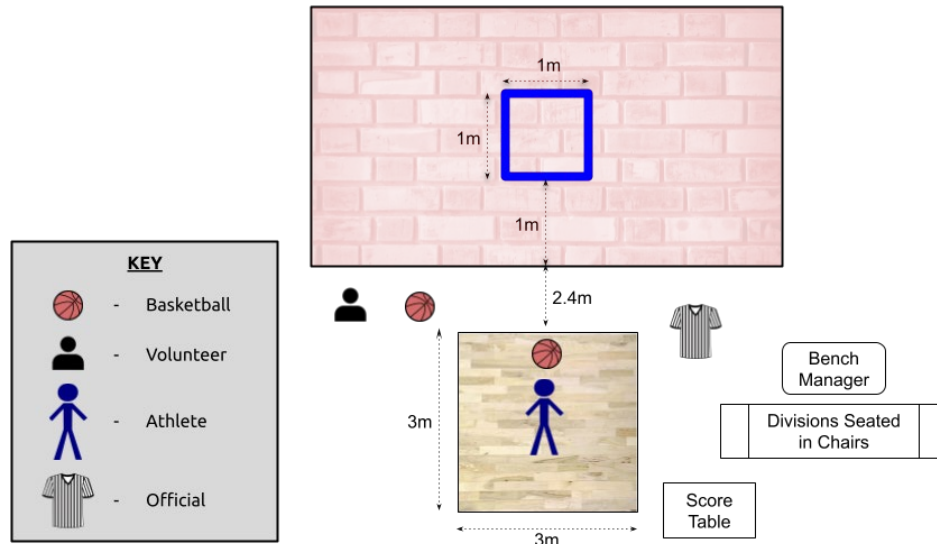
1. The following events provide meaningful competition for athletes with lower ability levels. It is not for athletes who can already play the game.
2. Athletes who receive assistance in the portion of the event that determines the score will receive a “Non Score” for the event. Athletes who score “Non Score” in all of the events will only be eligible for a Participation award. In order to receive a placement award (Gold through 8th Place), athletes must perform at least one of the events below without receiving assistance in the portion of the event that determines the score (see specific events for details).
3. Four events comprise the Individual Skills Contest: Target Pass (Chest), Target Pass (Bounce), Ten Meter Dribble, and Spot Shot.
4. The athlete’s final score is determined by adding the scores achieved in each of these ~~three~~ four events.
5. Athletes will be pre-divisioned according to their total scores from these ~~three~~ four events as well as gender and age group. Athletes in wheelchairs will be placed in wheelchair divisions.
6. Each event is diagrammed with the suggested number and placement of volunteers who will administer them. It is also suggested that the same volunteers remain at an event throughout the competition so that consistency is provided.

ISC Event #1: Target Pass (Chest)



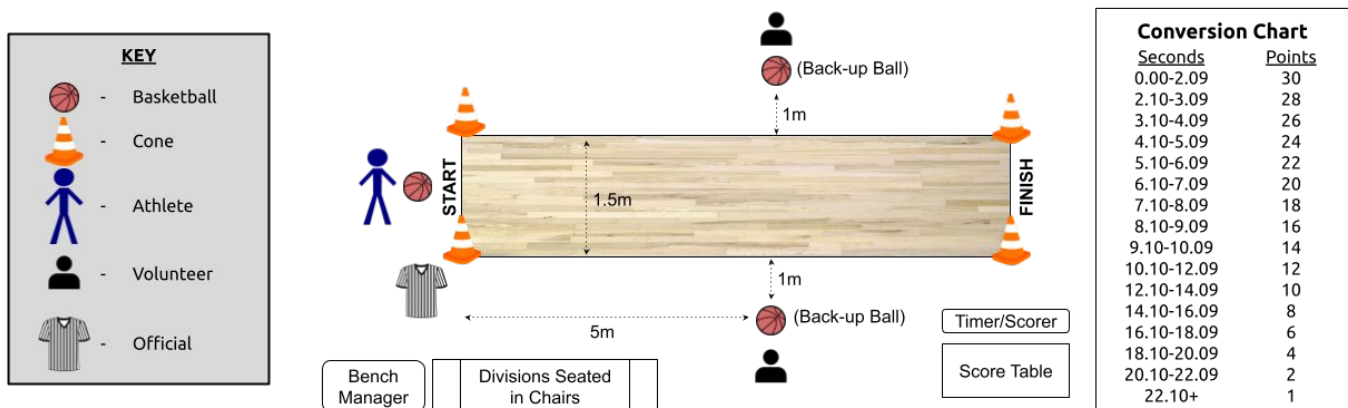
1. Purpose: To measure an athlete's skill in passing a basketball using a chest pass.
2. Equipment
 - a. Two 29 ½" basketballs (for women's and junior division competitions, a smaller basketball of 72.4 centimeters [28 1/2 inches] in circumference and between 510-567 grams [18-20 ounces] in weight may be used as an alternative).
 - b. Flat wall.
 - c. Chalk or floor tape.
 - d. Measuring tape.
3. Description
 - a. A 1m (3'3 ½") square is marked on a wall using chalk or tape. The bottom line of the square of the line shall be 1m (3'3 ½") from the floor.
 - b. A 3m (9'10") square will be marked on the floor and 2.4m (7'10") from the wall.
 - c. The athlete must stand within the square. The leading wheel axle of an athlete's wheelchair may not pass over the line.
 - d. The athlete is given five passes.
4. Scoring
 - a. The athlete receives 3 points for hitting the wall inside the square.
 - b. The athlete receives 2 points for hitting the lines of the square.
 - c. The athlete receives 1 point for hitting the wall but not in or on any part of the square.
 - d. The athlete receives 1 additional point for catching the ball in the air or after one or more bounces while standing.
 - e. The athlete receives 0 points if the ball bounces before hitting the wall.
 - f. The athlete's score will be the sum of the points from all five passes.
 - g. The maximum score that can be attained is 20. The minimum score is zero.
 - h. If the athlete receives assistance throwing, or otherwise moving the ball in a forward motion, or catching it on the rebound, they will receive a "Non Score" for this event.

ISC Event #2: Target Pass (Bounce)



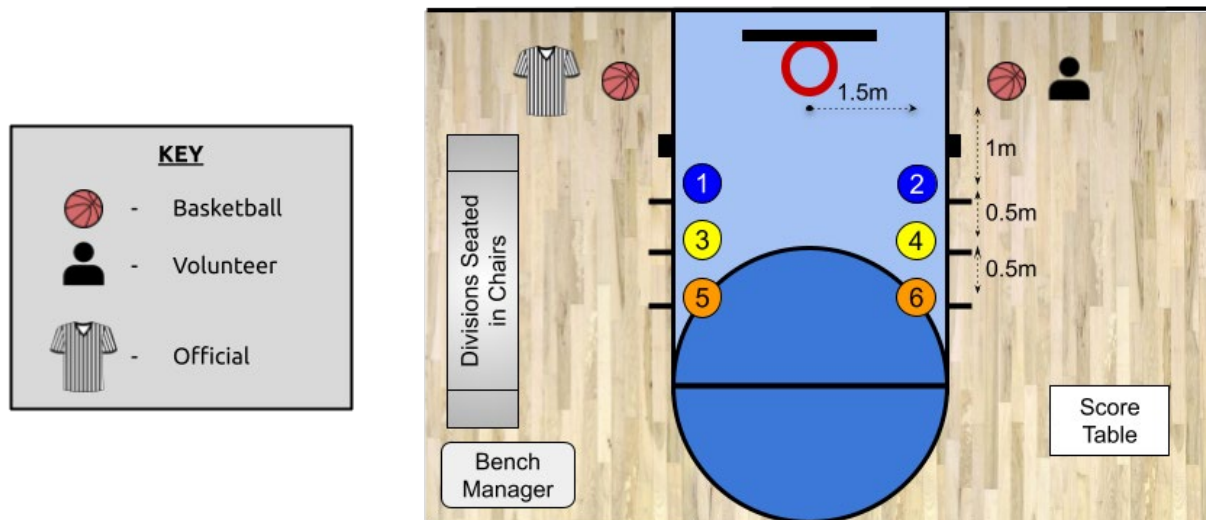
1. Purpose: To measure an athlete's skill in passing a basketball using a bounce pass.
2. Equipment
 - a. Two 29 ½" basketballs (for women's and junior division competitions, a smaller basketball of 72.4 centimeters [28 1/2 inches] in circumference and between 510-567 grams [18-20 ounces] in weight may be used as an alternative).
 - b. Flat wall.
 - c. Chalk or floor tape.
 - d. Measuring tape.
3. Description
 - a. A 1m (3'3 ½") square is marked on a wall using chalk or tape. The bottom line of the square of the line shall be 1m (3'3 ½") from the floor.
 - b. A 3m (9'10") square will be marked on the floor and 2.4m (7'10") from the wall.
 - c. The athlete must stand within the square. The leading wheel axle of an athlete's wheelchair may not pass over the line.
 - d. The athlete is given five passes.
4. Scoring
 - a. The athlete receives 3 points for successfully bouncing the ball once on its way to hitting the wall inside the square.
 - b. The athlete receives 2 points for successfully bouncing the ball once on its way to hitting the lines of the square.
 - c. The athlete receives 1 point for successfully bouncing the ball once on its way to hitting the wall but not in or on any part of the square.
 - d. The athlete receives 1 additional point for catching the ball in the air or after one or more bounces while standing.
 - e. The athlete receives 0 points if the pass is not a bounce pass (is a chest pass) or the ball bounces more than once before hitting the wall.
 - f. The athlete's score will be the sum of the points from all five passes.
 - g. The maximum score that can be attained is 20. The minimum score is zero.
 - h. If the athlete receives assistance throwing, or otherwise moving the ball in a forward motion, or catching it on the rebound, they will receive a "Non Score" for this event.

ISC Event #3: Ten-Meter Dribble



- Purpose: To measure an athlete's speed and skills in dribbling a basketball.
- Equipment
 - Three 29 1/2" basketballs (for women's and junior division competitions, a smaller basketball of 72.4 centimeters [28 1/2 inches] in circumference and between 510-567 grams [18-20 ounces] in weight may be used as an alternative).
 - Four traffic cones.
 - Floor tape or chalk.
 - Measuring tape.
 - Stopwatch.
- Description
 - The athlete begins from behind the start line and between the cones.
 - The athlete starts dribbling and moving when the Official signals.
 - The athlete dribbles the ball with one hand for the entire 10m (32'9 3/4). A wheelchair athlete must alternate taking 2 pushes followed by two dribbles for legal dribbling.
 - The athlete must cross the finish line between the cones and must pick up the basketball to stop the dribble. If an athlete loses control of the ball, the clock continues to run. The athlete can recover the ball. However, if the ball goes outside the 1.5m lane, the athlete can either pick up the nearest back-up basketball or recover the errant ball to continue the event.
- Scoring
 - The athlete will be timed from the signal "Go" to when s/he crosses the finish line and picks up the basketball to stop the dribble.
 - A one-second penalty will be added every time the athlete illegally dribbles (i.e. starts and stops (double-dribble), carries the ball (traveling), etc. A continuous two-hand dribble is allowed). A 10-second penalty will be added if the athlete doesn't dribble at all between Start and Finish.
 - The athlete will receive two trials.
 - Each trial is scored by adding penalty points to the time elapsed and converting the total to points based on the Conversion Chart.
 - The athlete's score for the event is his/her best of the two trials converted into points. (In case of a tie, the actual time will be used to differentiate place.)
 - The maximum score that can be attained is 30. The minimum score is 1.
 - If the athlete receives assistance moving from Start to Finish and/or dribbling or holding the ball, they will receive a "Non Score" for this event.

ISC Event #4: Spot Shot



1. Purpose: To measure an athlete's skill in shooting a basketball.
2. Equipment
 - a. Two 29 1/2" basketballs (for women's and juniors division competitions, a smaller basketball of 72.4 centimeter's [28 1/2 inches] in circumference and between 510-567 grams [18-20 ounces] in weight may be used as an alternative).
 - b. Floor tape or chalk.
 - c. Measuring tape.
 - d. 10 foot regulation goal with backboard.
3. Description
 - a. Six spots are marked on the floor. Start each measurement from a spot on the floor under the front of the rim. The spots are marked as follows:
 - i. #1 & #2 = 1.5m (4'11" to the left and right plus 1m (3'3 1/2") out.
 - ii. #3 & #4 = 1.5m (4'11" to the left and right plus 1.5m (4'11") out.
 - iii. #5 & #6 = 1.5m (4'11" to the left and right plus 2m (6'6 3/4") out.
 - b. The athlete attempts two field goals from each of six spots. The attempts are taken at spots #2, #4, and #6 and then at spots #1, #3, and #5.
4. Scoring
 - a. For every field goal made at spots #1 and #2, two points are awarded.
 - b. For every field goal made at spots #3 and #4, three points are awarded.
 - c. For every field goal made at spots #5 and #6, four points are awarded.
 - d. For any field goal attempt that does not pass through the basket but does hit either the backboard and/or the ring, one point is awarded.
 - e. The athlete's score will be the sum of the points from all 12 shots.
 - f. The maximum score that can be attained is 36. The minimum score is zero.
 - g. If the athlete receives assistance shooting, or otherwise moving the ball in a forward motion, they will receive a "Non Score" for this event.

FINAL ISC SCORE

1. The athlete's final score for the Individual Skills Contest is determined by adding together the scores achieved in each of the three events. The maximum final score possible for one round is 106.
2. A sample of the Basketball Individual Skills Contest Scorecard can be found on following page (Page 19).

SAMPLE BASKETBALL INDIVIDUAL SKILLS CONTEST SCORECARD

**Special Olympics
Northern California**
Individual Skills Contest (ISC) Scorecard
BASKETBALL

Place Athlete Label Here

Athlete Name:	Age Group:	Division:	
Delegation:	Gender:		

	ATTEMPTS						SCORE	
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
TARGET PASS (CHEST)								Sum of Points
TARGET PASS (BOUNCE)								Sum of Points
TEN-METER DRIBBLE	Time	Pts	Time	Pts				Best Score
SPOT SHOT	<i>Spot 2</i>	<i>Spot 4</i>	<i>Spot 6</i>	<i>Spot 1</i>	<i>Spot 3</i>	<i>Spot 5</i>		Sum of Points
Total Score								

Target Pass (Chest)

- Athlete must stand in square marked on floor - Athlete is given 5 passes
- **Scoring:**
 - 3 points for hitting wall inside the square
 - 2 points for hitting the lines of the square
 - 1 point for hitting the wall, but not in or on any part of the square
 - 1 additional point for catching the ball in the air or after one or more bounces on the rebound while standing in the square
 - 0 points if the ball bounces before hitting the wall
- **Score is the sum of all points from the 5 passes (Maximum of 20 points)**

Target Pass (Bounce)

- Athlete must stand in square marked on floor - Athlete is given 5 passes
- **Scoring:**
 - 3 points for hitting wall inside the square after at least, but no more than, one bounce on floor on way to wall
 - 2 points for hitting the lines of the square after at least, but no more than, one bounce on floor on way to wall
 - 1 point for hitting the wall, but not in or on any part of the square after at least, but no more than, one bounce on floor on way to wall
 - 1 additional point for catching the ball in the air or after one or more bounces on the rebound while standing in the square
 - 0 points if the pass is not a bounce pass or the ball bounces more than once before hitting the wall
- **Score is the sum of all points from the 5 passes (Maximum of 20 points)**

Ten-Meter Dribble

- Athlete begins from behind start line and starts dribbling when official signals
- If athlete loses control of ball, clock still runs; if ball goes outside of 1.5m lane, athlete can pick up the nearest back-up ball and continue
- Athlete receives 2 trials
- **Scoring:**
 - Athlete is timed from the signal "go" to cross of finish line between cones and picks up ball to stop dribble
 - 1 second penalty added for each illegal dribble (no dribble at all = 10-second penalty)
 - Each trial is scored by adding penalty points to time elapsed and converting the total points (see Conversion Chart to the right)
- **Score is best of two trials (Maximum of 30 points)**

Conversion Chart	
Seconds	Points
0.00 - 2.09	30
2.10 - 3.09	28
3.10 - 4.09	26
4.10 - 5.09	24
5.10 - 6.09	22
6.10 - 7.09	20
7.10 - 8.09	18
8.10 - 9.09	16
9.10 - 10.09	14
10.10 - 12.09	12
12.10 - 14.09	10
14.10 - 16.09	8
16.10 - 18.09	6
18.10 - 20.09	4
20.10 - 22.09	2
22.10+	1

Spot Shot

- Athlete attempts 2 field goals from each six spots
- Attempt order: #2, #4, #6, #1, #3, #5
- **Scoring:**
 - Field goals made at Spots #1 & #2 are 2 points
 - Field goals made at Spots #3 & #4 are 3 points
 - Field goals made at Spots #5 & #6 are 4 points
 - Missed shots that hit backboard and/or rim are 1 point.
- **Score is the sum of the points from all 12 shots (Maximum of 36 points)**

SECTION N – 2026 RULE CHANGES

1. Actual rules changes listed below are in **red font, underlined and in bold print** within the rule book.
2. General formatting and wording changes.
3. Rule Change Summary:
 - a. Added rules limiting number of coaches on competition roster and game coach passes.
 - b. Added NFHS rule allowing only the head coach to stand during game play.
 - c. Updated Individual Skills Contest (ISC) event diagrams (no changes to rules or scoring).
4. Changes within the Rules & Guidelines below:

Page 8 – Section D: Game Roster

SECTION D – GAME ROSTER

1. Regional Entry Form (Registration Information due prior to tournament):
 - a. A Regional Entry Form must contain a minimum of six players and a maximum of 12 players for Traditional 5-A-Side play. All coaches must also be listed on the Regional Entry Form.
 - b. All coaches must also be listed on the Regional Entry Form, with a maximum of three (3) per roster for Levels 2, 3 and 4. Level 5 teams may have a maximum of four (4) coaches per roster. All coaches, including the baseline coach for Level 5, will be required to pick up a game pass from the official scorekeeper or court manager, which must be worn and visible at all times for the duration of the game, while on the bench (and for the baseline coach for Level 5). Passes must be returned to the pickup location following the conclusion of the game. Only those displaying a valid coach pass will be allowed in team areas. Coach passes are in addition to any other issues identification for the competition (e.g., wristbands).

Page 9 – Section E: Coaches and Their Responsibilities

SECTION E – COACHES AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Coaches shall remain within the designated “coach’s box” (typically located on the same side as the scorer’s table and team benches, beginning at the baseline and extending 28 feet towards the mid-court line (or shorter if the view of the game from the scorer’s table is obstructed or has been designated otherwise by the Games Director)) while the game is in progress. See Diagram E.1. Only the head coach may stand during game play and all other coaches must remain seated (NFHS Rule), with the exception of the Baseline Coach in Level 5, who may also stand during game play.