

Basketball Nova Scotia (BNS)
Rules of Play

INTRODUCTION.....	3
1. AGE REQUIREMENTS.....	3
2. BALL SIZE.....	3
3. GAME SCHEDULES.....	3
4. MERCY RULE.....	4
6. GAME TIMING.....	4
7. OVERTIME.....	4
8. NUMBER OF PLAYERS.....	5
9. ROSTERS (BNS Provincial Club Championships).....	5
10. UNDER 12 AGE CLASSIFICATION VARIATIONS.....	5
11. UNDER 14 AGE CLASSIFICATION VARIATIONS.....	7
12. UNDER 16 AND 18 AGE CLASSIFICATION VARIATIONS (BNS Provincial Club Championships).....	8
13. GAME LOST BY FORFEIT.....	8
14. FIBA TIE BREAKING PROCEDURE.....	9
15. SEEDING (BNS Provincial Club Championships).....	11
16. PROTESTS.....	12
17. DISCIPLINE.....	12

INTRODUCTION

Basketball Nova Scotia (BNS) follows **FIBA Official Basketball Rules EXCEPT** for the variations included in this rule documentation. Amendments to the FIBA rules for BNS-run competitions support long term athlete development and were made in consultation with a group representing BNS membership.

These competition rules will be reviewed annually with insight from Canada Basketball and BNS membership.

Major changes for the 2024-2025 season are noted directly below for ease of review and also highlighted in yellow throughout the rule document.

1. BNS has launched a new discipline policy that outlines the consequences for violating certain rules (mercy rule, equal play rule).
 - a. Violation of the equal play rule will result in the head coach receiving a 1 game suspension.
2. U14 division three (3) will now play four (4) eight (8) minute quarters (along with D1 and D2). Equal play does not apply to U14 D1, D2, D3.
3. U12 free throw line will be shortened to 14 feet.
4. U14 division 1, 2, and 3, have no defensive restrictions.
5. All U16 and U18 age eligible athletes are able to participate in the U16/18 BNS club provincial championships.
6. All teams must submit a minimum of 3 seeding games with the roster they'll use in provincial championships. $\frac{2}{3}$ of the seeding games must be against clubs outside of your region.
7. Discipline and Complaints policy - This is being updated and will be included as soon as the policy is approved.

NOTE: It is the responsibility of all coaches to know the playing rules therefore we strongly encourage all coaches to read and understand these rules. Please connect with BNS Manager of Sport & Technical Programs for any questions on rules - basketballtd@sportnovascotia.ca

1. AGE REQUIREMENTS

1.1 Current Year – Defined as the normal period of operation for basketball extending from September 1st to August 31st. The current year is also divided into two (2) playing seasons; fall/winter (October 1-May 4) and spring/summer (May 5-September 30)

1.2 Under 10 Developmental Jamboree Eligibility – A player must not have reached the age of 10 prior to January 1st of the current year.

1.3 Under 12 Eligibility – A player must not have reached the age of 12 prior to January 1st of the current year.

1.4 Under 14 Eligibility – A player must not have reached the age of 14 prior to January

1st of the current year.

1.5 Under 16 Eligibility – A player must not have reached the age of 16 prior to January 1st of the current year.

1.6 Under 18 Eligibility – A player must not have reached the age of 18 prior to January 1st of the current year.

2. BALL SIZE

3.1 Under 10 and Under 12 girls and boys: **Size 5**

3.2 Under 14, Under 16 and Under 18 Girls: **Size 6**

3.3 Under 14, 16 and 18 Boys: **Size 7**

3. GAME SCHEDULES

(As it pertains to BNS Provincial Club Championships)

All scheduled games are to be played as scheduled unless BNS determines that a schedule must be altered due to extenuating circumstances which include but may not be limited to:

4.1 Weather

4.2 Referee issues

4.3 Team travel issues

4.4 Facility issues

4. MERCY RULE

5.1 In **Under 12 Division 3 and below**, when a team is ahead by 30 points or more the scores shall be set to 0 on the score clock for the remainder of the game. The score will be kept on the scoresheet.

5.2 In **Under 12 Division 1 or 2**, if a team is ahead by 15 points or more the leading team shall no longer be permitted to employ a pressure defense.

5.3 In **Under 14, Under 16 and Under 18** age groups, if a team is ahead by 25 points or more, the leading team shall no longer be permitted to employ full court pressure defense of any kind.

Important Note: In reference to BNS's new discipline policy & chart, any team official or coach who fails to abide by the mercy rule will be suspended for one (1) game.

6. GAME TIMING

6.1 In all age categories, games are played until there is a winner, according to the overtime procedures outlined below.

6.2 Under 12 will play eight 4-minute stop time shifts with a 1-minute break between quarters.

6.2.1 Each quarter will consist of two 4 minute stop time shifts.

6.2.2 Half time will be 5 minutes when and where possible. Half-time may be shortened if the game is running behind schedule.

6.3 Under 14 (with the exception of D1, D2 and **D3** who will play 4 eight minute quarters) will play six 4-minute stop time shifts (in the first three quarters) and 1 eight minute fourth quarter, with a 1-minute break between quarters.

6.3.1 Half time will be 5 minutes when and where possible. Half-time may be shortened if the game is running behind schedule.

6.4 Under 16/Under 18 will play four quarters of 10 minutes each with a 2 minute break between quarters.

6.4.1 Half time will be 5 minutes when and where possible. Half-time may be shortened if the game is running behind schedule.

6.5 The game clock shall be stopped when a field goal is scored with less than 2 minutes remaining in the final quarter or overtime.

7. OVERTIME

Under 12/Under 14: If a winner has not been determined at the end of regulation play, there will be 4 minutes of overtime. If a winner still hasn't been determined, overtime periods of 4-minutes will repeat until a winner has been determined.

Equal play rules do not apply to overtime.

Under 16/Under 18: If a winner has not been determined at the end of regulation play, there will be 5 minutes of overtime. If a winner still hasn't been determined after that, overtime periods of 5-minutes will repeat until a winner has been determined.

8. NUMBER OF PLAYERS

8.1 In the **Under 12 age group**, each team must have a minimum of eight (8) players for an official game. A team may start a game with five (5) players however all eight (8) players must play by the fifth shift or the game shall be ruled as a default. In the event of a default, the game shall still be officiated and scored. A team must have used a minimum of eight (8) players to complete an official game. If a team only has eight (8) players and a player becomes injured or fouls out, the team must play the remainder of the game with four (4) players on the court.

8.2 In the **Under 14, Under 16, and Under 18 age groups**, each team must have a minimum of five (5) players present for the start of the game.

8.3 Teams can have a maximum of 15 athletes on a roster.

9. ROSTERS (BNS Provincial Club Championships)

9.1 Playing for Another Club – A player can only play with one club for Provincial Club Championships. If an athlete plays for a different club than they played with through the season, the team on which they play must submit at least three (3) seeding games (prior to the seeding deadline) with that athlete on their roster.

9.2 Playing in a Higher or Lower Division – Any player may play in an older age class, but no player shall play down in an age class younger than their eligibility.

**No team shall play at an age level lower or higher than when they registered with BNS at the beginning of the fall/winter or spring/summer seasons OR than when they played in the minor basketball season.

Any and all U10 teams are only permitted to participate in the U10 Jamboree.

9.3 Number of Rosters Athlete can Play On – No player can be listed on more than one roster for Provincial Club Championships (includes U10 Jamboree). For example: an athlete cannot be listed on a roster for a team in the U12 Provincial Club Championships AND a roster for a team in the U14 Provincial Club Championships).

9.4 Official Team Roster for Coaches Subject to Rule 9.5 - All team officials present on the bench during a game must be listed on the team's official roster (the roster that was submitted to BNS at the time of registration). This includes coaches, assistant coaches, managers and other team or club officials.

9.5 Coaching Approval Request – During Provincial Club Championships, should a coach be unavailable for a team's game, and a person not listed on the team's roster be required to fill in, approval in writing must be granted by the BNS Executive Director at least 3 hours prior to the game start time.

9.6 Ineligible Athlete - If a team plays any part of a game with an athlete who is deemed ineligible according to any of the above noted rules, the team automatically forfeits the game.

10. UNDER 12 AGE CLASSIFICATION VARIATIONS

10.1 Equal Play – In all levels of Under 12, no one player shall play more than a one shift difference than any other team mate (by the end of the game) and no player shall be permitted to play more than five (5) shifts in a game (excluding overtime).

If eight (8) or more players have not been used in accordance with "Equal Playing Time" by games end, **the head coach shall receive a one (1) game suspension** and the scorer shall record clearly on the score sheet that the game is a default against the violating team.

10.1.1 Should a player arrive to a game late or leave a game early they are required

to play equal time for the portion of the game which they are at the game.

10.2 Substitutions during a shift – If a player fouls out, becomes injured or is unable to play their shift, they must be replaced by a player who has not played for more than 20 minutes (5 shifts X 4 minutes). The player replacing this player will be charged with the full shift and the injured or unable to play player will also be charged for the full shift. The coach may choose to not substitute a player and play with only four (4) for the remainder of the shift.

10.3 No 3 Point Baskets – All successful attempts at a basket with the exception of free throws, shall be awarded 2 points. There shall be no 3 point shots in the Under 12 age class.

10.4 Free Throw Line – The free throw line will be shortened by 1 foot to a 14 foot length.

10.5 Full Court Defense – After a made basket, or dead ball in the front court, the team now going on defense must retreat back to the 3 point line area in their own back court until the opposing team crosses half court. In the case where there is no 3 point line, the top of the key area should be used. After a defensive team violation, the offensive team will be permitted to inbound the ball in their own backcourt in alignment with their 3-point line/top of the key, regardless of the spot of the violation.

10.5.1 Full court defense exception – In Under 12 Divisions 1 and 2, a player to player only, full court press will be permitted in **all four quarters as well as extra time**.

10.6 Player to player defense – Defense must be Player to player. Zone defenses of any kind are not permitted.

10.7 No Double Teaming – Double teaming is not permitted (with the exception of rule 10.7.1). Help defense is permitted but not in a sustained manner such as a trap. When an offensive player has beaten their defender another defender may step in to help momentarily (maximum of 2 seconds) but then must immediately return to guard their own offensive player or switch players to return to player to player.

10.7.1 Once the ball has entered the key, double teaming the ball is permitted.

10.8 Penalty for Illegal Defenses – If in the view of the Referee there is intent to play a zone defense or double team, the following penalties shall be assessed:

10.8.1 On the first offense, play shall be stopped, and a warning shall be issued to the coach utilizing the illegal defense. Play shall resume with the ball being awarded to the offensive team.

10.8.2 On the second and any subsequent offense, the defensive team shall be penalized and the offensive team will be granted 1 free throw and will inbound the ball at the point of interruption. If a team is in violation of one rule more than 3 times during one game, the referee will write a report (including teams involved, nature of the violations, any possible intentional violations) and send it to the BNS Executive Director at bnsexecutivedirector@sportnovascotia.ca for review.

10.9 Last 24 Seconds Timing – In order to allow the defense to attempt to gain possession of the ball without the clock expiring, the clock shall not start when:

10.9.1 The offensive team has a 3 point lead or less, there are 24 seconds or less remaining in the game, and the offensive team has not yet brought the ball over

half.

10.9.2 This rule does not apply to Under 12 Division 1 and 2 where full court pressure is permitted.

10.10 Penalty Foul Shots – In the Under 12 age group, 2 shifts will count as 1 quarter. (Shifts 1 and 2 = 1st quarter; shifts 3 and 4 = 2nd quarter; etc.) A team accumulating a total of 5 team fouls in a quarter, would allow the opposing team to reach a penalty situation where they would shoot 2 free throws for the fifth and every foul thereafter in the quarter. The foul count is reset to 0 at the start of each subsequent quarter.

10.11 Should overtime be required, any player who has not fouled out during the game shall be permitted to play in the overtime shift(s).

10.12 The last two minutes of play will follow FIBA rules (on a scored basket, the clock will stop).

11. UNDER 14 AGE CLASSIFICATION VARIATIONS

11.1 **Division 4** and below, defense must be player to player. **Zone defenses of any kind are not permitted.** **Division 1, 2 and 3, defense can be player to player OR zone, however coaches at this level are strongly encouraged to stick to player to player principles unless the athletes have a firm understanding of defensive principles.**

11.2 No Double Teaming – Double teaming is not permitted (with the exception of rule 11.2.1). Help defense is permitted but not in a sustained manner such as a trap. When an offensive player has beaten their defender another defender may step in to help momentarily but then must immediately return to guard their own offensive player or switch players to return to player to player. Players are permitted to double team at the discretion of the coach.

11.2.1 Once the ball has entered the key, double teaming the ball is permitted.

11.2.2 **U14 defensive restrictions do not apply to Divisions 1, 2, and 3.**

11.3 Penalty for Illegal Defenses – If in the view of the Referee there is intent to play a zone defense or double team, the following penalties shall be assessed:

11.3.1 On the first offense, play shall be stopped, and a warning shall be issued to the coach utilizing the illegal defense. Play shall resume with the ball being awarded to the offensive team.

11.3.2 On the second and any subsequent offense, the defensive team shall be penalized and the offensive team will be granted 1 free throw and will inbound the ball at the point of interruption. If a team is in violation of one rule more than 3 times during one game, the referee will write a report (including teams involved, nature of the violations, any possible intentional violations) and send it to the BNS Executive Director at bnsexecutivedirector@sportnovascotia.ca for review.

11.4 Equal Play – In all levels of Under 14 **Division 4** and lower, no one player shall play more than a one shift difference than any other team-mate over the duration of the first three quarters of the game (with those three quarters being divided into two 4-minute shifts). If players have not been used in accordance with “Equal Playing Time” by the end of the third quarter, the scorer shall record clearly on the score sheet that the game is a default against the violating team. Equal play does not have to be followed in the fourth quarter, which will consist of 1 eight minute quarter.

11.4.1 Equal play does not apply to U14 Divisions 1, 2, and **3**, however coaches are strongly encouraged to offer all athletes playing time for proper athlete development.

11.5 Substitutions during a shift – If a player fouls out, becomes injured or is unable to play their shift, the player replacing this player will be charged with the full shift and the injured or unable to play player will also be charged for the full shift. The coach may choose to not substitute a player and play with only four (4) for the remainder of the shift.

11.6 Fourth Quarter Exclusion – Rules 11.4, and 11.5 do not apply in the fourth quarter or in overtime.

12. UNDER 16 AND 18 AGE CLASSIFICATION VARIATIONS

12.1 The U16 and U18 girls age groups may be combined to form a U16/18 division as needed due to low registration numbers.

12.2 All under 16 and 18 age athletes are eligible to compete in the Provincial Club Championships.

12.3 Seeding Games: According to the seeding criteria, teams must play and submit to BNS by the seeding deadline a minimum of 3 seeding games, with $\frac{2}{3}$ games being against teams outside of your region. **There are no exceptions to seeding game submissions.**

12.4 All under 16 and 18 teams will be seeded starting with Division 1.

12.5 All under 16 and 18 divisions must have a minimum of six (6) teams and can have a maximum of eight (8) teams. If the minimum number of teams is not available, BNS has the authority to cancel the division.

12.6 Seeding information and rosters must be submitted to BNS no later than the seeding deadline.

13. GAME LOST BY FORFEIT

13.1 Teams will forfeit a game if:

13.1.1 The team is not present or is unable to field five (5) players ready to play 15 minutes after the game is scheduled to begin.

13.1.2 A team's actions prevent the game from being played (as determined by BNS).

13.1.3 A team refuses to play after being instructed to do so by the officials.

13.1.4 A team does not follow equal play rules after more than 1 warning OR if an athlete plays or does not play the proper number of shifts, according to the equal play rule.

13.1.5 If an athlete who is ineligible based on any of the rules above (roster section, eligibility section) plays in any part of a game.

13.2 Penalty for a forfeit:

13.2.1 The game is awarded to the opponents and the score shall be 20 to 0. Furthermore, the forfeiting team shall receive 0 classification points.

13.2.2 If in a tournament the team forfeits for the second time, the team shall be disqualified from the tournament and the results of all games played by this team shall be nullified.

14. FIBA TIE BREAKING PROCEDURE

14.1 Procedure – Teams shall be classified according to their win-loss records, namely two (2) points for each game won, one (1) point for each game lost and zero (0) points for a game lost by forfeit.

14.2 If there are two or more teams in the classification with equal points, the result(s) of the game(s) between the two or more teams will be used to determine the placings.

14.3 If the two or more teams have the same win-loss record of the games between them, further criteria will be applied in the following order:

14.3.1 Higher goal difference (difference between the number of points scored vs. the number of points scored against) of the games between them.

14.3.2 Higher number of goals scored in the games between them.

14.3.3 Higher goal difference of all games in the group

14.3.4 Higher number of goals scored in all games in the group

If these criteria still cannot decide, a draw shall decide on the placings.

14.4 If two or more teams have equal points and HAVE NOT played each other, the following criteria will be followed:

14.4.1 Higher goal difference (difference between the number of points scored vs. the number of points scored against) of the games between them

14.4.2 Higher number of goals scored in the games between them

14.4.3 Higher goal difference of all games in the group

14.4.4 Higher number of goals scored in all games in the group

If these criteria still cannot decide, a draw shall decide on the placings.

14.5 If, at any stage, using the above criteria, a multiple team tie is reduced to a tie involving only two teams, the procedure in 17.3 and 17.4 will be applied.

14.6 More than two teams – equal points:

Example 1

A vs. B	100-55	B vs. C	100-95
A vs. C	90-85	B vs. D	80-75
A vs. D	75-80	C vs. D	60-55

Team	Games Played	Wins	Losses	Points	Goals	Goal Difference
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A	3	2	1	5	265:220	+45
B	3	2	1	5	235:270	-35
C	3	1	2	4	240:245	-5
D	3	1	2	4	210:215	-5

Therefore: 1st A – winner against B 3rd C – winner against D
2nd B 4th D

Example 2

A vs. B 100-55 B vs. C 100-85
A vs. C 90-85 B vs. D 75-80
A vs. D 120-75 C vs. D 65-55

Team	Games Played	Wins	Losses	Points	Goals	Goal Difference
A	3	3	0	6	310:215	+95
B	3	1	2	4	230:265	-35
C	3	1	2	4	235:245	-10
D	3	1	2	4	210:260	-50

Therefore: 1st A

Classification of the games between B, C, D:

Team	Games Played	Wins	Losses	Points	Goals	Goal Difference
B	2	1	1	3	175:165	+10
C	2	1	1	3	150:155	-5
D	2	1	1	3	135:140	-5

Therefore: 2nd B, 3rd C – winner against D, 4th D

Example 3

A vs. B 85-90 B vs. C 100-95
A vs. C 55-100 B vs. D 75-85
A vs. D 75-120 C vs. D 65-55

Team	Games Played	Wins	Losses	Points	Goals	Goal Difference
A	3	0	3	3	215:310	-95
B	3	2	1	5	265:265	0
C	3	2	1	5	260:210	+50
D	3	2	1	5	260:215	+45

Therefore: 4th A

Classification of the games between B, C, D:

Team	Games Played	Wins	Losses	Points	Goals	Goal Difference
B	2	1	1	3	175:180	-5
C	2	1	1	3	160:155	+5
D	2	1	1	3	140:140	0

Therefore: 1st C 2nd D 3rd B

Example 4

A vs. B 85-90 B vs. C 100-90
A vs. C 55-100 B vs. D 75-85
A vs. D 75-120 C vs. D 65-55

Team	Games Played	Wins	Losses	Points	Goals	Goal Difference
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A	3	0	3	3	215:310	-95
B	3	2	1	5	265:260	+5
C	3	2	1	5	255:210	+45
D	3	2	1	5	260:215	+45

Therefore: 4th A

Classification of the games between B, C, D:

Team	Games Played	Wins	Losses	Points	Goals	Goal Difference
B	2	1	1	3	175:175	0
C	2	1	1	3	155:155	0
D	2	1	1	3	140:140	0

Therefore: 1st B 2nd C 3rd D

15. SEEDING (BNS Provincial Club Championships)

15.1 Divisions shall be appointed by a Seeding Committee consisting of the BNS Manager of Sport & Technical Programs (MSTP) and a minimum of two (2) other basketball community members with knowledge of the landscape of minor basketball in the province.

Important Note: Teams may not end up in the same division as registered. Division placements will be determined by the seeding process.

15.2 Divisions will be determined by:

15.2.1 Division that a team requested at the time of registration for Provincial Club Championships.

15.2.2 Division that a team played in league play during the season (if applicable).

15.2.3 Number of teams eligible for the division.

15.2.4 Results of games played throughout the season vs. metro and rural teams.

15.3 In the U12 and U14 age groups, if a division has four (4) or fewer teams, the division will be canceled.

Note: Eight (8) team divisions is the goal for championship play, and BNS has the oversight and discretion to adjust division rankings accordingly.

15.4 In the U16 and U18 age groups, if a division has fewer than six (6) teams, the division may be canceled.

15.4.1 BNS will designate three (3) weekends as seeding weekends (for the U16 and U18 age groups), at the beginning of the season, and teams will be expected to use those dates for seeding games. Teams are also welcome to play seeding games at any point throughout the season.

15.5 All teams participating in BNS Provincial Club Championships (in all divisions) are required to submit a **minimum of three (3) seeding games** (with the roster playing in the championship tournament), where $\frac{2}{3}$ games are played against a team outside of your region. Teams must upload seeding games to the BNS database (RAMP).

Teams that played in the Metro Basketball Association League must also upload their seeding games. If a team plays in the metro league against a team from another region (ie: team from Halifax plays a team from the Valley in a metro league game), this does NOT count as one of their out of region seeding games.

15.5.1 Game sheets must include team rosters for the home and away team AND home and away team names. The roster for seeding games must be the same roster that is submitted to BNS for Provincial Club Championships. All players on the roster must play in the seeding game.

15.5.2 If there are athletes who were not present for a seeding game, the game MAY be submitted, but the team must submit at least 2 other games, where the missing athlete was playing. (All athletes on official rosters must be present for at least 2 seeding games).

15.5.3 Seeding information for U12 and U14 age groups must be submitted to BNS no later than the seeding deadline.

15.5.4 Seeding information for U16 and U18 age groups must be submitted to BNS no later than the seeding deadline.

16. PROTESTS

16.1 A team may file a protest if the team's interests have been adversely affected by:

16.1.1 A violation of coach or player eligibility, OR equal play rules.

16.2 Protests must be communicated **within 20 minutes** of the end of the game, to the host of the division facility who will contact BNS directly.

16.3 In case of a team's protest, the scoresheet, the host or an official may be used to help provide insight on the situation being assessed.

16.4 Protest outcomes from BNS Provincial Club Championships will be decided by a Protest Review Committee composed of the BNS Executive Director, BNS MSTP, and 1-2 others.

16.5 In order to be admissible, a protest shall comply with the following procedures:

16.5.1 The head coach of the protesting team shall notify the division host per the timelines indicated, and provide a written explanation of the protest reasons, on the reverse side of the scoresheet.

16.5.2 The Protest Review Committee will review the protest details and decide on the protest as soon as possible, in any case no later than before the next game is played by the protesting team and the opposing team.

16.5.3 The decision by the Protest Review Committee is final and not subject to further review or appeal.

16.5.4 The Protest Review Committee may decide not to change the result of the game unless there is clear and conclusive evidence that a rule has been broken. In the event that the protest is successful, the team that is being protested against will forfeit the game and take a loss on their record, and the protesting team will

be credited a win.

16.6 After the protest resolution, a written decision via email will be shared with the parties involved.

17. DISCIPLINE

Please refer to the **BNS Discipline Policy & Chart** for specific disciplinary items.