

Quabbin Valley Youth Basketball League
Game Rules – 2026 Season
Last Updated 10/20/2025

The Quabbin Valley Basketball League is a recreational basketball league designed to give children the chance to play basketball, learn various skills associated with the game, fair play, and sportsmanship. While winning is an important goal, it is not the sole importance of playing the games.

General Rules:

1. The Quabbin Valley Basketball League (QVBL) is a recreational league with cities/towns in Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden counties. Any community from the surrounding area may request to join; however, they must have the backing or support from their local park and recreation department and/or a recognized parent association and they must agree to play by the rules of play as written in this document.
2. We ask coaches and parents to serve as role models and ensure that players develop positive attitudes and good sportsmanship. While we keep scores and standings, fun and good sportsmanship are the priorities.
3. The league website will be used for schedules, standings, contact info, and the distribution of information. It is www.leaguelineup.com/quabbinvalleybasketball
4. All coaches and managers in all divisions are directly responsible to their organization representatives and/or town recreation director.
5. There shall be no tobacco products on school grounds.
6. The QVBL, officials of the cities and/or towns, sponsoring organizations, coaches, managers, referees, or any other city and town employees cannot be held responsible for any injuries incurred while participating or observing activities in this league.
7. It is mandatory that each team in all divisions have a First Aid Kit available for games and practices.
8. All coaches must submit a CORI check through their parks and recreation department and/or sponsoring organization.

Divisions/Rosters:

1. Players must be from the city/town of the team for which they are playing on and/or attend school in the town through a “school choice” program with the following exceptions:
 - a. If a community does not offer a team in the league or division, a player from that community may play for another community in the QVBL. If a league program has an “in-town” division, those players are not eligible to play for another community if people are looking for a travel experience.
 - b. If a player wants to play for another community and their community has a team in that division, they must get permission (written and/or email) between coordinators.
 - c. Players that live in non-QVBL communities and do not school choice or have a parent living in those communities cannot play in the QVBL.
 - d. Anything not covered in this will be voted on by the league coordinators.

2. The determining effective date for all grade classifications is **September 1st, 2025**, and participants must play in the grade division they are currently in for the 2025-2026 school year.
3. There will be 3 divisions of play in both boys & girls leagues. The divisions will be as follows:
 - a. 3/4. Players cannot turn 11 prior to Sept 1, 2025 and cannot be in 5th grade or above.
 - b. 5/6. Players cannot turn 13 prior to Sept 1, 2025 and cannot be in 7th grade or above.
 - c. 7/8. Players cannot turn 15 prior to Sept 1, 2025 and cannot be in 9th grade or above.
4. Participants are allowed to participate in a division above his or her age group; however, this must be approved by the director and this player can only play and appear on one team's roster.
5. If a player is looking to play in a lower age group, this must be approved by the QVBL directors and is done only for extreme circumstances.
6. The use of Suburban and/or travel players is allowed; however, this is a recreational league, and the use of those players should be to get kids additional playing time that are not receiving it at that level or to assist when a QVBL team is short players. **The QVBL is not for the Suburban/travel player that plays significant minutes in those leagues.** Each community can have their own policies which might differ from the league which are stricter.
7. Middle school players that are brought to their high school program and eligible to play; however, once they achieve varsity status, they are ineligible to play in this league. Please note, many of our programs have their middle schools as part of their high schools, so those kids might be on their high school JV team and are still eligible to play in this league.
8. Second graders may be used in the 3/4th divisions with the approval of their communities' director. This is intended to help fill in a roster that needs extra players and not as a substitute for a second-grade division due to quality of play.
9. Borrowing Players: if a team is short players due to small rosters and/or injury/sickness, they can borrow from other teams in the same division and/or call a player up from a younger age group. This should not be done to win a game or because you are playing a better team. We would rather teams have two rosters of seven (7) players instead of one roster for 14 players for example.

Season:

1. The regular season will be played between Friday, January 2 and Sunday, March 1.
2. Teams may play pickup games, scrimmage games, or tournaments in December; however, those will not be considered QVBL regular season games.
3. Teams will play between 10-12 regular season games.
4. Games are played any time on Saturday or Sunday and during the evening on weeknights. The 8pm weeknight slot can only be used for the 7/8th grade division.
5. Teams can submit a list of schedule requests (no play dates); however, requesting all Saturdays or Sundays off will not be honored. This is primarily a weekend play league.
6. The playoffs for 5/6th and 7/8th grade will be played March 5-9. The following weekend will be used if that weekend is cancelled due to bad weather.
7. There will be no playoff in the 3/4th division. They will have a jamboree on March 7 (boys) or March 8 (girls) hosted in Belchertown.

Game Play Rules: *We play by regular NFHS/MIAA Rules if it is not found in this document.*

1. Equal playing time for all participants should be the goal for all coaches.
2. Jewelry as prescribed in NFHS Rule is illegal and cannot be worn. This includes earrings, necklaces, rubber bracelets, rings, etc... Tape covering earrings is not permissible.
3. The head-coach is the only coach permitted to stand during play. Assistant coaches can stand during timeouts and/or intermissions. If a team has co-coaches, they must designate one coach that can stand prior to the game. This is the NFHS rule.
4. Basketball:
 - a. The 3/4th Divisions will use a “Junior” sized basketball (27.0 or 27.5).
 - b. The 5/6th Boys and 7/8th Girls will use a 28.5 basketball.
 - c. The 5/6th girls will use a “Junior” 27.0 or 27.5 basketball.
 - d. The 7/8th Boys will use a standard “Men’s” basketball (29.5).
5. There will be a 10 second backcourt violation for all divisions. This includes the 3/4th division as we want teams to get the ball over half court and not delay.
6. If a team has less than five (5) players, the teams can agree to play with less than five (play four on four) or the other team can “loan” a player to the other team. Teams are allowed a 10-minute period to field a team.
7. Closely guarded count is for “holding only” in the front court.
8. Free throws:
 - a. Teams will shoot the bonus two (2) shots on the seventh team foul in each half. Teams do not shoot the bonus following team/player control fouls (a foul on the offensive team).
 - b. *The block closest to the basket is now empty. The first lane space is no longer used...the two defensive players that are required now go in lane spaces #2. The two offensive players go in #3 and the other two defensive players go in #4*
 - c. *Players along the lane line(s) can now enter the lane for a rebound after the shooter releases the ball on a free throw attempt. The shooter and all remaining players behind the 3-point arc must still wait until the ball hits the rim and/or backboard before they can enter that area.*
 - d. *3/4th and 5th/6th Grade Players ONLY - If the player crosses the foul line in the act of shooting, a violation will NOT be called; however, the shooter must start with both feet behind the line, the free throw shooter cannot run in the lane to get a rebound until the ball hits the rim (Officials' discretion).*
 - e. ***In the 3/4th division, the player can shoot from 12 feet instead of 15 feet which is the mid-point between the free throw line and the semi-circle closest to the hoop.***
9. Defense: A team can play any type of defense they want, zone or man-to-man. When there are 3 or more subs at one time, teams can quickly request a “match-up” when subbing.
10. There is NO 3-second rule in the 3/4th division.
11. Pressing:
 - a. In the 3/4th Divisions, there is no pressing. The defensive team must remain in their 3-point arc until the offensive team crosses half court. Once the ball crosses half court, the defense can leave the 3-point arc.
 - b. In the 5/6th and Divisions, team can press during the entire game **unless they are ahead by 10 or more points. It is 15 points in 7/8th** If they are ahead by 10 (15 for 7/8th) or more points, that team **must fall back to inside the 3-point arc.** Once the

ball obtains front court status with the ball and player in the front court, the defense can then come out of the 3-point arc and play defense anywhere in the front court.

- *Penalty: Teams will be given two warnings for violations of this rule. Any subsequent violation will result in a technical foul assessed to the head coach.*
- *The purpose of the penalty is to have a deterrent from coaches deliberately keeping a press on. If a player attempts a quick steal after a rebound and realizes his/her mistake and then gets back on defense, we are not looking to penalize a team in that manner. The warnings are for deliberate acts to play full court defense and the official has the ability to rule based on his/her discretion.*
- *It is highly recommended that if a team is up by 20 or more points, that team should refrain from fast breaks on offense. The team ahead should make every effort to hold the ball until the defense is allowed a chance to setup and then bring up the ball at that point. They are encouraged to make a certain number of passes and give all of their players a chance to score.*

Timing:

Division	Game Length	Halftime	Timeouts
3/4 th Grade	Two, 18 min halves	3 minutes	Two @ 60 seconds per game
5/6 th Grade	Two, 18 min halves	3 minutes	Three @ 60 seconds Per game
7/8 th Grade	Two, 18 min halves	3 minutes	Three @ 60 seconds Per game

1. The first 16 minutes of each half will be running time. The clock will only stop for shooting fouls (will start per normal rules), timeouts and/or injuries.
2. The final two minutes of each half will be regulation stop time and the clock will stop on all whistles.
3. In the last two (2) minutes of the game, the timers may run the clock if one team is ahead by 15 points or more.
4. Timeouts are 60 seconds in length. Teams are expected to return to the floor after the warning horn at 45 seconds and be ready to play for the second horn.
5. Overtime:
 - a. If the game is tied at the end of regulation, there can be one (1) overtime period.
 - b. Overtime will be two (2) minutes in length. The first minute will be running time and the second minute will be stop time.
 - c. Teams will have one (1) timeout during overtime, they lose any unused timeouts.
 - d. If the game is still tied after one (1) overtime, then the game is declared a tie.
 - e. In the playoffs, there is no overtime limit. Teams play until there is a winner.

Standings/Score Reporting:

1. The **WINNING COACH** must call in or email the scores within 24 hours after the completion of the game to **their coordinator** OR
2. We will also make a direct reporting option available for the coaches if they choose to use it. There will be an email with specific instructions on how to do this sent to the coaches.
3. The point system used for division play will be two (2) points for a win and one (1) point for a tie.
4. If there is a tie, the head-to-head result will be the first tiebreaker. If there is still a tie, a coin toss will be the next tiebreaker.

Officials/Behavior:

1. Each community is responsible for scheduling and paying officials for their home games.
 - a. In the 7/8th grade division, it is mandatory that the referees be adults (18+) and ideally certified.
 - b. In the 5/6th grade division, it is mandatory that the officials be adults (18+) and ideally certified.
 - c. In the 3/4th division, any official can be used provided they are properly trained. A certified official with a youth official is allowed.
 - d. The recommended rate for a certified official is \$40.00 per game.
2. If there are no officials for the game, the head coaches must agree on spectator/coaches to officiate the game. For the regular season, the games must be played if an official doesn't show up and the results will count towards the standings.
3. Anyone that receives two (2) technical fouls, they are out for the remainder of that game and the following game.
4. Players, coaches and spectators are prohibited from harassing or verbally abusing officials at any time preceding, during or following the game.
 - a. If harassment continues the officials will give a technical foul to the offending team to stop further abuse.
 - b. Any player or coach, receiving two technical fouls must leave the premises.
 - c. Officials will file a report with their communities' coordinator who will then report it to the league director.
 - d. Any spectator ejected from the gym during a Quabbin Valley game will receive a minimum of a three (3) game suspension. Two (2) ejections in the same year will result in a one-year suspension from attending Quabbin Valley games. If the offended individual is caught attending a game, that team will forfeit the game and will risk being removed from the league.
5. Any player or coach that is ejected, will serve a minimum of a one game suspension. The program coordinator and/or league board will decide on additional games.
6. **Any player, coach, or manager who threatens or assaults any League Official will automatically receive a one-year suspension with discussion of the severity of assault for possible lifetime banishment.**
7. Any player or coach involved in a fighting incident anywhere on school property while participating in League activities will be suspended for the remainder of that game and the

next scheduled game. Any 2nd offense will result in suspension from the League for the remainder of the season and possible lifetime banishment.

8. The league will have a committee devoted to dealing with issues that arise during the season and their decisions are final. We will look for communities to offer volunteers to serve on this committee and they will not rule on items that involve their own communities.

Cancellations and Reschedules:

1. The home program/team is responsible for cancelling games a minimum of two hours prior to the start time. **Each community has their own procedures for cancelling, but at a minimum, they must update the league website if a game is to be cancelled and should contact the opposing coach and/or coordinator.**
2. Make-up Games:
 - a. Game should be replayed within two (2) weeks of the original date when possible.
 - b. The home team is responsible for setting up the makeup date with the visitors.
 - c. The coordinator must be notified to update the league website and schedule officials.

Playoffs:

1. There is a playoff for the 5/6th and 7/8th grade divisions. Teams can “opt out” if they would like.
2. Players must have played in 50% of their team’s games to be eligible to play unless they have written approval from the QVBL due to injury or other extenuating circumstance.
3. The format for each division will be decided by the league director with approval of the coordinators.
4. Individual towns will be assigned to run a specific playoff division (i.e. South Hadley runs 5/6 girls and Northampton has 5/6 boys). More communities need to host.
5. The playoffs for the 5-8th grade divisions will be held March 4 to March 8, 2026. The playoffs for a certain division will all be played in one community and teams can play double-headers to get the games in.
6. The 3/4th division will have a jamboree. Boys on March 7, 2026 and girls on March 8, 2026 in Belchertown.
7. There are no ties in the playoffs. Games played to completion.
8. The hosting site will invoice the visiting teams for the playoffs, breaking up the cost for officials, gym time, score staff, and tee-shirts equally between the competing teams or by the number of games played. Up to the discretion of the hosting site.
9. Borrowing players; players can only play for one team in the playoffs. Once they play for that team, they cannot play for another town team.

Quabbin Valley Game Play Rules – Cheat Sheet 2026 Season

Game Play Rules: *We play by regular NFHS/MIAA Rules if it is not found in this document.*

1. Jewelry as prescribed in NFHS Rule is illegal and cannot be worn. This includes earrings, necklaces, rubber bracelets, rings, etc... Tape covering earrings is not permissible.
2. The head-coach is the only coach permitted to stand during play. Assistant coaches can stand during timeouts and/or intermissions. If a team has co-coaches, they must designate one coach that can stand prior to the game. This is the NFHS rule.
3. Basketball:
 - a. The 3/4th Divisions will use a “Junior” sized basketball (27.0 or 27.5).
 - b. The 5/6th Boys and 7/8th Girls will use a 28.5 basketball.
 - c. **The 5/6th girls will use a “Junior” 27.0 or 27.5 basketball**
 - d. The 7/8th Boys will use a standard “Men’s” basketball (29.5).
4. 10-Second Backcourt:
 - a. There will be a 10 second backcourt violation for all divisions. This includes the 3/4th division as we want teams to get the ball over half court and not delay.
5. If a team has less than five (5) players, the teams can agree to play with less than five (play four on four) or the other team can “loan” a player to the other team. Teams are allowed a 10-minute period to field a team.
6. Closely guarded count is for “holding only” in the front court.
7. Free throws:
 - a. Teams will shoot the bonus two (2) shots on the seventh team foul in each half. Teams do not shoot the bonus following team/player control fouls (a foul on the offensive team).
 - b. *Players along the lane line(s) can now enter the lane for a rebound after the shooter releases the ball on a free throw attempt. The shooter and all remaining players behind the 3-point arc must still wait until the ball hits the rim and/or backboard before they can enter that area.*
 - c. ***3/4th and 5th/6th Grade Players ONLY*** - *If the player crosses the foul line in the act of shooting, a violation will NOT be called; however, the shooter must start with both feet behind the line, the free throw shooter cannot run in the lane to get a rebound until the ball hits the rim (Officials' discretion).*
 - d. ***In the 3/4th division, the player can shoot from 12 feet instead of 15 feet which is the mid-point between the free throw line and the semi-circle closest to the hoop.***
8. Defense: A team can play any type of defense they want, zone or man-to-man. When there are 3 or more subs at one time, teams can quickly request a “match-up” when subbing.
9. There is NO 3-second rule in the 3/4th division.
10. Pressing:
 - a. In the 3/4th Divisions, there is no pressing. The defensive team must remain in their 3-point arc until the offensive team crosses half court. Once the ball crosses half court, the defense can leave the 3-point arc.
 - b. In the 5/6th and Divisions, team can press during the entire game **unless they are ahead by 10 or more points (15 in 7/8th)**. If they are ahead by 10 or more points (15 in 7/8th), that team **must fall back to inside the 3-point arc**. Once the ball obtains

front court status with the ball and player in the front court, the defense can then come out of the 3-point arc and play defense anywhere in the front court.

- *Penalty: Teams will be given two warnings for violations of this rule. Any subsequent violation will result in a technical foul assessed to the head coach.*

Timing:

Division	Game Length	Halftime	Timeouts
3/4 th Grade	Two, 18 min halves	3 minutes	Two @ 60 seconds per game
5/6 th Grade	Two, 18 min halves	3 minutes	Three @ 60 seconds Per game
7/8 th Grade	Two, 18 min halves	3 minutes	Three @ 60 seconds Per game

10. The first 16 minutes of each half will be running time. The clock will only stop for shooting fouls (will start per normal rules), timeouts and/or injuries.
11. The final two minutes of each half will be regulation stop time and the clock will stop on all whistles.
12. In the last two (2) minutes of the game, the timers may run the clock if one team is ahead by 15 points or more.
13. Timeouts are 60 seconds in length. Teams are expected to return to the floor after the warning horn at 45 seconds and be ready to play for the second horn.
14. Overtime:
 - f. If the game is tied at the end of regulation, there can be one (1) overtime period.
 - g. Overtime will be two (2) minutes in length. The first minute will be running time and the second minute will be stop time.
 - h. Teams will have one (1) timeout during overtime, they lose any unused timeouts.
 - i. If the game is still tied after one (1) overtime, then the game is declared a tie.
 - j. In the playoffs, there is no overtime limit. Teams play until there is a winner.

Officials/Behavior:

1. If they receive two (2) technical fouls, they are out for the remainder of that game and the following game.
2. Any spectator ejected from the gym during a Quabbin Valley game will receive a minimum of a three (3) game suspension. Two (2) ejections in the same year will result in a one-year suspension from attending Quabbin Valley games. If the offended individual is caught attending a game, that team will forfeit the game and will risk being removed from the league.