



Curriculum



Always Fun
Building Skills
Cultivating Values
Developing Mental & Physical Wellness

Contents

| | | |
|---|--|-----------|
| > | Jr. NBA Overview | 04 |
| > | Jr. NBA Philosophy | 05 |
| > | Jr. NBA Pathway | 09 |
| > | Jr. NBA Curriculum Features | 10 |
| ∨ | Jr. NBA Coaching Tips | 12 |
| | > Communication Tips | 19 |
| | > Practice Tips | 21 |
| | > Integrate Team Competition & Challenges | 26 |
| > | NBA & USA Basketball Youth Guidelines | 29 |

Jr. NBA Overview

The Jr. NBA is the official youth basketball participation program of the NBA. The Jr. NBA helps to encourage and support youth basketball participation and improve the overall youth basketball experience. The Jr. NBA aims to develop a lifelong passion for the game of basketball for boys and girls by teaching them the fundamentals of the sport while instilling core values including teamwork, respect and sportsmanship.

- **THE JR. NBA IS COMMITTED** to creating a safe space for all participants to learn the fundamentals and core values of basketball. Fostering a culture of inclusivity, equity, and respect is an integral aspect of all Jr. NBA events and programs.



Jr. NBA Philosophy

The Jr. NBA Philosophy is to share the game of basketball with youth across the world by teaching skills, values, and wellness in a positive and fun environment. The Jr. NBA's holistic approach is intended to strengthen the culture of youth basketball, teach life lessons, and empower youth to live a full and healthy life. The Jr. NBA believes this philosophy leads to developing complete and well-rounded basketball players and people.

The Jr. NBA philosophy manifests itself in the curriculum through the ABCD's of the Jr. NBA. The ABCD's of the Jr. NBA are the foundation of the curriculum and the base for the Jr. NBA's holistic approach. Each element of the ABCD's of the Jr. NBA is equally important and works with the other components for holistic development.

ALWAYS FUN

We love the game of basketball because at the core, It's FUN! Fun directly leads to fostering a lifelong love of the game. Basketball should be fun at every level. As players make progress in their development, the way they experience fun will also evolve. Whether it's encouraging a first-time player as they learn to dribble, or helping a young player set goals, the focus should always be oriented around fun.

Continued

The ABCD's of the Jr. NBA

Always Fun

Building Skills

Cultivating Values

**Developing
Mental & Physical
Wellness**

The 7 Ways that Jr. NBA Players Experience Fun

Achieving Goals

Mastering Skills

**Loving the
Process**

**High Fives
& Smiles**

**Cheering for
Others**

Interactive Games

**Positive
Encouragement**



BUILDING SKILLS

Building basketball skills is an essential part of learning the game. The Jr. NBA recognizes that skill development is a process that is especially important to youth players. The Jr. NBA uses a development list comprised of skills and concepts that players are exposed to while moving through the curriculum levels.

New skills, concepts and loads are added in as Jr. NBA players advance through the curriculum. This approach helps players gain new skills while challenging their existing skill set.

CULTIVATING VALUES

The game of basketball provides everyone involved the opportunity to learn valuable lessons on and off the court. The lessons learned in the Jr. NBA curriculum will be with our players for a lifetime. Therefore, the Jr. NBA makes it a priority to cultivate these core values through all programming.

A key element of the Jr. NBA philosophy is to incorporate a mental performance or character-building message into every practice. Values are also taught in unscripted situations and we encourage coaches to embrace those opportunities naturally. The Jr. NBA mental performance and character lessons will undoubtedly go beyond the court and help youth players in other areas of their lives.

Skill Categories

- Ball-Handling**
- Passing**
- Shooting**
- Footwork & Conditioning**
- Rebounding**
- Offense**
- Defense**

Character Building Values

- Teamwork**
- Sportsmanship & Fairness**
- Leadership**
- Respect**
- Responsibility**
- Confidence & Humility**
- Positivity & Receptiveness**



DEVELOPING MENTAL & PHYSICAL WELLNESS

One of the best parts of the game of basketball is that it promotes wellness across many dimensions of life. The Jr. NBA wants to educate and encourage young players to be healthy mentally and physically.

The Jr. NBA believes that developing as a complete person is more important than exclusively focusing on basketball development. Throughout the curriculum, there are several themes to promote complete development, such as mental and physical wellness, nutrition, and time management.

Aspects of Wellness

Active Lifestyle

Time Management

Injury Prevention

Nutrition

Rest & Recovery

Healthy Relationships

Balanced Lifestyle



Jr. NBA Pathway

The Jr. NBA Pathway has been developed to help players, parents, coaches, and organizations better understand the path of improvement.

The Jr. NBA Pathway is based on player skill proficiency as opposed to age. The pathway is a developmentally-based progression that teaches new skills and enhances current skills as players advance through the curriculum.

The Jr. NBA Pathway is divided into four levels.



At each of the four levels, there are unique methods, messages, skills, and drills that incorporate and teach the ABCD's of the Jr. NBA.

Jr. NBA Curriculum Features

HOW IT WORKS

The Jr. NBA curriculum comes to life in a series of 12 practice plans in each of the four levels. Each level starts with a development list that identifies the skills and concepts that players will learn and develop throughout the lessons. Skills are taught by introducing game-like situations such as defense, contact, and decision-making to ensure player’s skills transfer to competition.

WHAT LEVEL IS APPROPRIATE?

Jr. NBA coaches can reference the table below to determine which level of the curriculum is the best fit for a team.

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| ROOKIE | Introductory level – little to no basketball experience |
| STARTER | Beginner level – basic basketball skills and knowledge |
| ALL-STAR | Intermediate level – familiar with team concepts |
| MVP | Advanced level – more experienced teams and players |

Cross-reference the above table with the development list provided at the start of each level of the curriculum and the average skill of the players on the team. Coaches can use loads to challenge players within a level and individual players within a team.

CURRICULUM UPDATES

As the game of basketball evolves so do the strategies and skills for coaching. The Jr. NBA has made several enhancements throughout the Rookie level of the curriculum, with the addition of the elements below. Find more details in the "Coaching Tips" section.

**CURRICULUM
UPDATES**

- › **Games Approach:** Practices have been updated to include fun games that simultaneously allow for skill development.

.....
- › **Small-Sided Games:** More small-sided competitions (1v1, 2v2, 3v3) have been added to the curriculum to ensure players learn through play.

.....
- › **Random Starts:** As opposed to starting from a stationary position, many drills now include players starting out of unpredictable motions or an action.

.....
- › **Loading and Deloading:** Several activities have been updated to feature modifications to increase or decrease the difficulty for individuals or the team.

.....
- › **Decision-Making:** Activities have been updated to include a focus on empowering players to develop decision-making skills.



Jr. NBA Coaching Tips

USE GAMES TO TEACH

A Games Based Approach

A games based approach to coaching basketball means using fun and competitive games to get players moving while teaching and learning fundamental skills. Many of the games included in the Jr. NBA curriculum incorporate the same skills and constraints that players will experience in a real basketball game. These games keep players engaged, using their imagination, and having fun while learning, building, and developing skills.

A games based approach to coaching can mean adjusting drills or activities to include competitive elements where players or teams are competing against time, a certain set score, themselves, or other teams and players. Coaches can adjust the rules or scoring of games and drills to emphasize specific skills, concepts, or elements of the game.

Another example of a games based approach is using fun warmup or skills-based games to teach transferable skills or utilizing small-sided gameplay, like 3v3 or 2v2, to develop and practice concepts in a live competitive setting.

**ADJUST
COMPETITION
TO INCREASE
REPETITIONS**

Small-Sided Games

Small-Sided Games are competitions that feature various combinations of offensive and defensive players and/or occur in a restricted area of the court. To help make practice more engaging and to increase the transfer of skills, consider the drill and activity adjustments below.

| DRILL ADJUSTMENTS | EXAMPLES |
|---|--|
| Create Advantages or Disadvantages | 2v3, 2v1, 3v4 |
| Adjust number of players | 1v1, 2v2, 3v3 |
| Skill Emphasis | Teams must complete 3 passes before shooting |
| Modify court space | Quarter-court, inside the 3-point line |
| Adjust scoring rules | Extra points awarded for a layup Minus points for offensive rebounds |
| Modify speed of play | Starting slow to teach new concepts and increasing speed as players increase understanding |

Small-sided games break the game down into segments, making it easier for players to learn and increase repetitions. They create more space on the floor, allowing coaches to emphasize basketball concepts, such as give and go, backdoor cuts, pick and roll/pop, spacing, general gameplay and communication.

**VARY THE WAY
DRILLS AND
GAMES START**

Random Starts

Starting a drill with a **fixed start** is when players begin an activity in a line or at a predetermined location on the court. Fixed starts are common and can be useful because they are easy to understand.

A **random start** is more similar to a game, in that the way drills begin can vary and can be unpredictable. Random starts allow players to execute and retain skills in more game-specific situations. You can vary who starts, where you start or how the drill starts to create the unpredictability.

| RANDOM START ADJUSTMENTS | EXAMPLES |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Who or How the drill starts | The player or team that will start the drill is unknown or how the drill starts varies. (call numbers, successful made shot) |
| Where the drills start | The location on the floor that the drill begins varies (location of the ball, completion of action) |

For example, the cone dribbling drill (Rookie Practice 7) could be modified with the following random starts:

Who or how the drill starts: The drill starts with two players gripping the ball facing each-other. Whoever rips the ball away from the other starts the drill. The other player will then compete with the next person in line until there is no other teammate to compete.

Where the drill starts: Players will start by dribbling around the court trying to tag each other until they hear the whistle. Once they hear the whistle the players will speed dribble to the nearest set of cones and start the drill. When they hear another whistle, they will begin dribbling around the court tagging each other again.

**MODIFY
ACTIVITIES
TO MAKE
THEM HARDER
OR EASIER**

Loading and Deloading

Loading and deloading keep drills and games fresh and developmentally appropriate. Loads can help coaches emphasize specific concepts to focus on in practice sessions.

Loading means to add constraints, rules, or progressions to a particular drill or game, making it more challenging or forcing players to use skills in a different way. Deloading means making drills or games easier by removing constraints, rules or progressions.

Types of loads: There are a variety of ways to load and deload drills and activities for individuals (specific player) or the entire team. Reference the table for different loads that have been integrated in the practice plans.

| TYPE OF LOAD | ADDING OR REMOVING FROM A DRILL |
|--------------------|---|
| Competitive | A competitive element (time, score) |
| Physical | A physical element (push-up, squat) |
| Social | A social element (high-fives, questions) |
| Tactical | A tactical element (offensive/defensive system components or game situations) |
| Technical | A technical element (crossover, reverse lay-up) |

Coaches are encouraged to use, combine and be creative with individual and team loads in Jr. NBA practices to help support and individualize player development.

Individual loads: Use individual loads when a specific player(s) needs to be further challenged or supported in development within a drill(s).

For example, the toss and catch drill (Rookie Practice 2) can have the following loads or deloads:

- › **Competitive Load:** Group advanced players and challenge them to be the first to complete 10 successful toss and catches
- › **Physical Load:** Add a squat before every toss and catch
- › **Technical Load:** Advanced players must toss the ball at a specific height before catching or clap before catching
- › **Technical Deload:** Beginner players can do lower tosses to eye-level before catching

Team loads: Use team loads to challenge the entire team with different rules or constraints in a drill or game.

For example, a 3v3 competitive drill such as the scramble game (Rookie Practice 8) or 3 on 3 numbers game (Rookie Practice 11) could have the following loads or deloads:

- › **Tactical Load:** Incorporate an action from your offensive set. For example, if one of your offensive sets includes a top to wing screen, start each possession with that screen. A second tactical load could be including an 8-10 second shot clock.
- › **Social Load:** After every possession, each team must huddle up for 5 seconds to communicate the successes of their possession.
- › **Technical Deload:** The offense scores by getting the basketball into the key or just hitting the rim on a shot attempt.

**INTEGRATE
DECISIONS
THROUGHOUT
THE SESSION**

Decision-Making

Decision-making is integrated throughout the Jr. NBA curriculum. Practices include several drills and games in each practice that give players the opportunity to make game-like decisions. In order to help skills translate into competition, practices should reflect the variety of decisions made and spontaneity of basketball games.

Differentiating from traditional skill development, decision-making based drills and games often include live defense or other reads and cues. The spontaneity and randomness in decision-making drills provides a dynamic learning environment that is fun and keeps players engaged physically and mentally. It is important for players to read (see, feel, and understand) situations so that they can make the correct decisions (pass, crossover, shoot), and act to apply those skills properly at the right time.

Teaching these three elements will help players understand how to make the correct basketball play at the appropriate moment.

-
- 1. Read:** Players use their eyes, ears, and touch to observe the situation in front of them
 - 2. Decide:** Players decide the best action based on their read
 - 3. Act:** Players execute a specific basketball action
-

As players develop their ability to read, decide and act, introduce additional decisions in order to simulate a game and further player development.

**DECISION
MAKING**
Continued

A **primary decision** is the first decision an offensive or defensive player makes within a particular possession. A defender may decide to attempt a steal because they are cued by an unprotected ball. An offensive player could make the decision to use a crossover dribble to beat their defender because they react to different defensive cues, such as an off-balance defender.

The **secondary decision** can occur after making this primary decision and new cues, decisions and action will be presented. The secondary decision cues may include seeing an open route to the basket, a help defender, or an open teammate for a pass and can be followed by additional decisions.



Communication Tips

THE RIGHT MESSAGE AT THE RIGHT TIME

Communication is critical to youth development. Good communication will improve teaching and the transfer of knowledge. Coaches should be thoughtful and intentional with the timing and content of a message. Consider these questions for more impactful communication:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Who are you communicating to? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Understand your players' personality types > Tailor your communication style accordingly > Use different motivation techniques |
| How are you communicating? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Make eye contact > Be genuine > Use humor when appropriate > Use non-verbal communication (high-fives, thumbs up, clapping) |
| What is the right message? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Use positive statements > Limit communication to 3 key points > Be consistent with messages |
| When is the right time? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > In the moment (during play) > In the huddle (at a break) > After practice/game > In front of team > Individual meeting |

DIVERSIFY METHODS OF FEEDBACK

Implement the following methods of feedback during practice. Remember to diversify feedback with questions to prompt athlete reflection and self-analysis:

- Recognition** > Appreciation for actions
- Compliments** > Building confidence
- Evaluation** > Analyzing and understanding skills
- Coaching** > Teaching and correcting for improvement

COACH WITH CUE WORDS

Use cue words to help players better understand your feedback, especially during live action. When developing cue words or sharing any feedback, consider the three C's.

C= Clear. Choose simple words pointing to an exact action that has been explained/defined

C= Concise. Choose words or phrases that are short and to the point

C= Consistent. Repetition of the cue word or feedback builds recognition and understanding

| SAMPLE CUE WORDS | DESCRIPTION |
|----------------------|---|
| "Cookie jar" | A reminder to players to snap their wrist and hold their follow through after shooting |
| "Ball. You. Player." | Check your defensive position between where the ball is located and the player you are guarding |
| "Next play" | Focus on the current play as opposed to the actions that have just occurred |

Practice Tips

CONSISTENT START TO PRACTICE

Signal the start of practice by selecting a particular place to meet the team such as half-court, the baseline, or another part of the court. These quick meetings are great ways for coaches to get to know players, discuss values, ask questions, and go over the practice plan.

LIMIT LINES AND MAXIMIZE SPACE AND EQUIPMENT

Use all available space, baskets and basketballs. Drills with long lines lead to players standing and waiting and kids want to PLAY! Reducing the amount of players in a line will keep them engaged and will allow for more time with the ball in their hands.

For example when leading a shooting drill, rather than one line for the whole team, divide players into as many lines as possible. Adding a passing line and a rebounding line can also assist in reducing wait times when limited by fewer basketballs.

TRANSITIONING BETWEEN DRILLS QUICKLY

One very important part of practice is the transition from drill to drill. Be concise with the drill set up and demonstrations to maximize activity time. If you need time to prepare for the next drill, there are numerous transitions that can be executed, including the below examples.

- › **Take a quick water break with a set time limit**
- › **Have players complete a layup or shoot free throws**
- › **Integrate a physical activity such as jogging to touch all four walls**

Upon their return, the players and coaches are ready for the next drill. Minimize talking, show your demo and get into the activity!

INVOLVE ASSISTANTS, VOLUNTEERS, PARENTS, OR ATHLETES

There are several ways that assistant coaches, volunteers, parents, or players can assist in running practice sessions. Prior to practice meet with assistants, review the practice plan, and assign roles.

ASSISTANTS CAN:

- › **Act as facilitators in drills and games by passing in a shooting drill or defending in a ball-handling drill.**
- › **Lead a station on another area of the court while the head coach leads their own station**
- › **Be officials or scorekeepers during small-sided games or competitions**
- › **Tend to injured players, give positive feedback, use cue words or answer questions that come up while the head coach continues practice**

INCORPORATE WATER INTO PRACTICE

Hydration is essential in basketball and can be creatively built into practice. Asking players to bring personally identified water bottles can help with safety and access to water. To keep practice flowing, add a timer to water breaks. In stations, include a rest station that incorporates water, or allow players to get water while waiting in a line or at a nearby station.

INCORPORATE THE "WHY" WHEN TEACHING SKILLS

The Jr. NBA activities have a "why" that connects the skill taught to the greater context of the game. Explaining the "why" will help players better understand the skill. For example, when working on a pivoting drill, show and explain that a player would use pivoting when there is defensive pressure and pivoting will create space to improve decision-making.

**USE CALL-
AND-RESPONSE**

When working with a group of players, using a call and response can signal that a coach is ready to give instruction, provide feedback, or move to another drill.

SOME CALL AND RESPONSES ARE:

- › **Use the name of an NBA team: Coach says “Brooklyn!” and the players respond “Nets!”**
- › **Use a popular player’s name: Coach says “Steph” and the players say “Curry!”**
- › **Coach blows the whistle twice and the players clap twice**

It is also helpful to explain drills before handing out basketballs to maximize player’s attention. If balls have been distributed use a call and response to help players focus.

**TEACH RESPECT
FOR OFFICIALS IN
PRACTICE**

Teaching players to respect officials starts in practice. The Jr. NBA curriculum features many small-sided games and competitions that are often officiated by a coach or assistant coach. Teach players to respect the officials and use positive body language and communication.

**END PRACTICE
POSITIVELY**

At the end of a practice session bring players together in the same space as the meeting at the start of the practice. End on a positive note by highlighting specific players or moments that were impressive during the practice. Debrief with the team on what skills and concepts were learned during the session and ask questions to check for understanding.

Practice Tips - Modifying Practice

There may be times you have limited space, equipment, or number of players and need to modify practice. Below are solutions for common practice limitations.

LIMITED COURT SPACE

On occasion, access to a full basketball court (or any court) is limited. Making adjustments will allow for smaller groups of players to work on different skills at the same time, play simultaneously, or give players more repetitions and less time waiting in lines.

ON A HALF-COURT:

- › **Replace full court or transition drills with skill development drills**
- › **Work on half-court offense or half-court defense**
- › **Execute stations or small-sided games**
- › **Split into two quarter courts and work on both sides of the basket**
- › **Use multiple small spaces on a court**

Not every skill requires a basket. If a basketball court is not available, utilize classrooms or any alternative spaces. Use the sideline, end line or classrooms to work on ball handling, passing, footwork, shooting mechanics, physical activities, or offensive and defensive concepts

LIMITED EQUIPMENT

Coaches may have to adjust their practice plans if faced with insufficient basketballs, cones, or baskets. When basketballs are limited, have players share or focus on drills that do not require balls such as defense, footwork, shooting technique, and communication.

**LIMITED
EQUIPMENT**

Continued

If cones or other floor markers are unavailable, use items such as water bottles, shoes, chairs, or trash cans. If a practice space is missing baskets, use trash cans, chairs, or even draw circles on the wall. Another solution is to adjust practice plans to focus on skills that do not involve shooting at a basket.

**UNEXPECTED
NUMBER OF
PLAYERS**

With fewer players than expected, be creative, focus on skill development and small-sided games such as 3-on-3, 2-on-2, or the numbers game. If you have an odd number of players, work on advantage situations such as 3-on-2 or 2-on-1 or make quick substitutions to ensure equal playing time. Practices with fewer players can target individual needs increase repetitions.

Find productivity with a large number of players by dividing into smaller groups and utilizing stations. Not every station requires a basket or a ball, so spread out and practice non-shooting skills in spaces that do not have a basket.

Integrate Team Competition & Challenges

Outside of scheduled team games, coaches can include intra-team competitions, tournaments, and challenges in practices to add fun and excitement. Coaches can add these special situations at the end of each practice, or even choose a few full practice sessions to turn into “game days.”

MINI-SEASON

Coaches can create consistent teams and run a mini 3v3 or 2v2 “season” with games during the last 10-15 minutes of each practice. Coaches can create consistent teams and build out a schedule of weekly games, culminating in a final tournament.

For example, if there are 12 players on a team, create four teams of three players and each week teams will play one game at the end of a practice session.

After a set number of weeks of games, host a final tournament using a bracket:

Game 1 > Seed 1 vs. Seed 4

Game 2 > Seed 2 vs. Seed 3

Finals > Winners of Game 1 and Game 2

Consolation > Losers of Game 1 and Game 2

To make it fun and engaging, promote upcoming matchups and track standings each week to get your players excited to play. Assign each team an NBA or WNBA team name.

GAME DAY

Identify a practice(s) to run small-sided games in a tournament format. To build excitement, designate these as “Game Day.”

**SAMPLE 3V3
GAME DAY**

For a 12-player team on a court with 2 baskets

| TIME | ACTIVITY |
|---|--|
| 5 min | Team meeting to review value, explain competition rules and format |
| 5 min | Make 4 teams of 3 players each and assign each team an NBA team name (Lakers, Clippers, Warriors, Kings) |
| 5 min | Warmups |
| 8 min | Game Session 1 Lakers vs. Clippers (court 1) Warriors vs. Kings (court 2) |
| 8 min | Game Session 2 Lakers vs. Warriors (court 1) Kings vs. Clippers (court 2) |
| 8 min | Game Session 3 Lakers vs. Kings (court 1) Clippers vs. Warriors (court 2) |
| AFTER GAME SESSIONS 1-3, RANK TEAMS BASED OFF THEIR RECORDS | |
| 8 min | Semifinals #1 vs. #4 (court 1) #2 vs. #3 (court 2) |
| 8 min | Championship game |

**LADDER
TOURNAMENTS**

A ladder tournament is a fun, competitive 1v1, 2v2 or 3v3 activity that can take place in one or across a series of practices. The advantages of running a ladder tournament is that teams are able to challenge other teams on their own, which doesn't require coach coordination. Teams will naturally play against even competition levels which will result in competitive games.

Coaches randomly assign a numbered ranking to each of the teams. Display rankings in a space where players can see and adjust as games are played. Teams can challenge a team one or two ranks above them on the ladder. Should the lower ranked team win, they move up the ladder one spot. If the lower ranked team loses, all rankings stay. Be sure to clarify the rules of play and determine length of weeks of the tournament to solidify final results and the winner of the ladder.

**SKILLS
CHALLENGES**

Beyond team competitions, coaches can use an entire practice to engage in fun skills challenges. These challenges may include any of the shooting games in the curriculum or additional activities such as: **Jr. NBA Hot Shot**.

Each player on the team gets 30 seconds to make as many shots as possible from the 5 locations listed below.

Top of the Key > Worth 3 points

Left and Right Elbow > Worth 2 points

Left and Right Block > Worth 1 point

Players can receive a bonus if they attempt a shot from all 5 locations. Coaches can modify the shot locations, time, or scoring system as needed.

NBA & USA Basketball Youth Guidelines

The NBA and USA Basketball have partnered to develop guidelines designed to promote a positive and healthy youth basketball experience. These guidelines prioritize the health and well-being of young athletes while enhancing enjoyment, participation, and development in the game. Please see the guidelines that follow.

RECOMMENDED PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

| AGE | GAME LENGTH | GAMES PER WEEK | PRACTICE LENGTH | # OF PRACTICES PER WEEK |
|-------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Ages 7-8 | 20-28 minutes | 1 | 30-60 minutes | 1 |
| Ages 9-11 | 24-32 minutes | 1 to 2 | 45-75 minutes | 2 |
| Ages 12-14 | 28-32 minutes | 2 | 60-90 minutes | 2 to 4 |
| Grades 9-12 | 32-40 minutes | 2 to 3 | 90-120 minutes | 3 to 4 |

MAXIMUM PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

| AGE | # OF GAMES/DAY | # OF HOURS PER WEEK IN ORGANIZED BASKETBALL |
|-------------|----------------|---|
| Ages 7-8 | 1 | 3 hours |
| Ages 9-11 | 2* | 5 hours |
| Ages 12-14 | 2* | 10 hours** |
| Grades 9-12 | 2* | 14 hours** |

MAXIMUM PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES
(Continued)

The maximum participation guidelines outlined above are intended to serve as limits on a young athlete’s participation in organized basketball. It is possible that participation in organized basketball within the maximum limits but in excess of the recommendations is also not advisable from a health and wellness standpoint; however, this issue requires further study.

** Youth basketball players, parents and coaches should demonstrate caution in scheduling or participating in more than one game per day, especially on consecutive days. If young athletes participate in an event or tournament in which more than one game is played per day on consecutive days, players should have additional time off from sports activities following the event to allow for recovery.*

*** It is recommended that young athletes in these age ranges who are approaching these maximum hour limits not participate in another organized sport concurrently.*

REST GUIDELINES

| AGE | MIN. # OF REST DAYS PER WEEK | MAX. MONTHS PER YEAR IN ORGANIZED BASKETBALL | RECOMMENDED HOURS OF SLEEP PER NIGHT |
|-------------|------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Ages 7-8 | 2 | 4 months | 9-12 hours |
| Ages 9-11 | 2 | 5 months | 9-12 hours |
| Ages 12-14 | 1 | 7 months | 8-10 hours* |
| Grades 9-12 | 1 | 9-10 months | 8-10 hours |

** For 12 year olds, 9-12 hours of sleep is recommended.*

**THE NBA
RECOMMENDS**

⊗ Delay specialization in basketball until at least age 14.

Playing multiple sports helps kids make new friends and develop new skills. Medical and scientific experts recommend early sports sampling and delaying single-sport specialization until mid to late adolescence. Playing multiple sports should not be viewed as falling behind, but rather as building the foundation for future success. Research shows that early sport specialization is NOT necessary to produce elite-level performance.

Sports sampling, which is characterized by participation in multiple sports during childhood, provides a young athlete the chance to find a sport that may ultimately fit him or her best. There are several demonstrated benefits of sports sampling:

- **Prolonged engagement in sports**
- **More enjoyable and positive early sports experiences**
- **Healthy physical, psychological, and social development**
- **Transfer of skill acquired from multiple sports to primary sport if specialization occurs**

Current research does not support the view that early single-sport specialization is either necessary or sufficient to produce elite performance at advanced levels of competition. In fact, early single-sport specialization in basketball and other team sports may be detrimental to long-term elite performance.

Athletes that reach the highest level of achievement have been shown to be more likely to have played multiple sports at a young age compared to athletes that reach relatively lower levels of achievement. With respect to basketball and other similar ball sports, world-class athletes often delayed single-sport specialization until age 16 or later.



VOLUME 3.0 • Published October 2021 • JrNBA.com