

Hoops for Hearts Rules 2026

1 Who Can Play

The tournament is open to players entering grades 4 through 10, as well as all adults. A designated coach is required for all youth teams. A player may not participate on multiple teams within the same bracket.

2 Number of Players

Each team may consist of a maximum of 4 players and a minimum of 3 players. A team may have only 3 players on the court at any time. All games must start with at least 3 players on each team.

3 Authorized Equipment & Apparel

No player shall be allowed to wear a guard, cast, hard brace or other potentially dangerous equipment on his or her elbow, hand, wrist, finger, or forearm, including equipment made of hard leather, plastic, plaster or metal—even if the equipment is covered with soft padding. Soft braces, sleeves and wraps will be allowed unless they pose a danger to other players. In addition, jewelry and large hair clips will not be allowed. Hoops for Hearts retains the right to disallow any equipment or apparel that it judges to be dangerous or inappropriate.

4 Eligibility Issues

All high school / college players are encouraged to check with their coaches and/or athletic directors about participating in Hoops for Hearst and the potential effects on their eligibility. Hoops for Hearts is not responsible for determining a particular athlete's eligibility under National Collegiate Athletic Association or applicable high school association rules.

5 Bracket Types

Teams will be divided into tournament brackets according to their players' ages or immediate upcoming school grades, heights, playing experience, and competition level, in accordance with the information on each team entry form. Tournament officials reserve the right to verify a player's entry form data. False information will be grounds for dismissal from the tournament. Each player in all brackets in 7th grade and above must possess photo identification upon sign-in. Failure to do so will result in ejection.

6 Basket Height

Baskets will be 8 feet high for teams whose players are entering grades 3 through 4; the height will be 10 feet high for all other brackets.

7 Basketball Size

The intermediate size ball will be used for all female games and any male games consisting of players entering grades 3 through 6. The full-size ball will be used for all other games.

8 Free Throw Shooting Distance

The distance for free-throws will be 10 feet for brackets consisting of teams whose players entering grades 3 through 4 and who are playing on an 8 foot basket; the distance will be 15 feet for all other brackets.

9 Two-Point Shooting Distance

The distance for two-point shooting is 16 feet for brackets consisting of teams whose players are entering grades 3 through 6; the distance will be 19 feet for all other brackets.

10 Stealing the Ball

Players in all age categories may steal the ball when it is being passed. Brackets consisting of teams whose players are entering grades 3 through 4 will have a no-steal rule when players are either dribbling or holding the ball. Stealing in those situations will be allowed in all other brackets.

11 Diversity Statement

Hoops for Hearts provides an atmosphere that is diverse and inclusive and will not tolerate discrimination of any kind. Hoops for Heartshas adopted a strict policy regarding all discriminatory remarks or actions from players, spectators, and tournament officials. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in expulsion from the event.

12 Fouls

Court monitors will be calling all fouls. If any foul is called 1 free throw will be granted. If the foul is called outside the 2 pointarc then the foul will result in two free throws. During a free throw, opposing team players may not intentionally disrupt the shooter's unhindered throw. A change of possession will result regardless of whether the free throw shot is made or missed.

After a foul shot, the ball will be placed into play from the back-court line.

Incidental contact between opponents shall not result in a called foul unless such contact results in a meaningful disadvantage.

Players fouled behind the two-point arc, while in the act of shooting, shall be awarded two free throws. A player fouled behind the two-point arc, not in the act of

shooting, shall be awarded one free throw. The exception will be for successful field goals, in which case the basket counts and no foul shots will be awarded.

A) Technical Fouls

A technical foul will be called for unsportsmanlike acts such as taunting, baiting, or trash talk. Taunting and baiting can involve derogatory remarks or gestures that incite or insult a player. Trash talk involves a deeply personal, verbal attack directed toward any person involved in the event. In extreme cases, the player may also be suspended from play and a coach or fan removed from the court for the remainder of that game or for the rest of the tournament. A player who aggressively comes into contact with or assaults a court monitor, court marshal, or other tournament official shall be automatically ejected from the game and for the remainder of the current tournament. Additional suspension for such acts will be determined by the Hoops for Hearts organization on a case by case basis. The court monitor may also assess a technical foul if the monitor determines that the team is stalling in the interest of preserving a winning margin. A technical foul results in one point for the offended team and possession of the ball.

B) Intentional Fouls

An intentional foul is a foul designed to neutralize an opponent's obvious advantageous position. It is a foul which, based on the court monitor's observation of the act, is not a legitimate attempt to directly play the ball. A foul shall also be ruled intentional, based on the monitor's observation of the act, if while attempting to play the ball, a player causes excessive contact. An intentional foul results in one point for the offended team and possession of the ball.

C) Crowd Control

The Team Captains or the designated Parent/Coach are the only people, other than the Players, whom are permitted to address the Court Monitor. Any Fans or Parents whom negatively address a Court Monitor, Marshal or Tournament Official shall be assessed a technical foul to their team.

13 Stalling

Stalling is prohibited. Stalling is a style of play in which a team does not actively attempt to advance the basketball toward the basket and shoot the ball at the basket. It is a method used in an attempt to run out the game clock to preserve a win. Stalling is considered an unsportsmanlike act and will result in a technical foul against the offending team (see rule 12a).

14 Which Team Receives the Ball First?

A coin toss prior to each game will determine which team gets the ball out-of-bounds first.

15 Keeping Score

All made baskets from inside the two-point arc count for one point and made baskets from outside the two-point arc count for two points. The first team to 20 points is the winner. (see rule 16 for exceptions).

16 Length of Game – 20 minutes

The target score for all games is 20 points, meaning the first team to reach 20 points within 20 minutes of play is declared the winner. The team that reaches 20 points does not need to have a winning margin of 2 points or greater.

The 20 minute clock is stopped during team time-outs (see rule 25) and if the court monitor stops play for a player injury (see rule 26) or other unusual circumstance. If a score of 20 is not achieved within 20 minutes, the team with the lead shall be declared the winner, regardless of the margin.

Only if the teams are tied will an overtime session be played. In overtime, the first team to score a total of two points shall be declared the winner. Except in grades 3-6, where overtime will be decided by sudden death, meaning the first team to score wins.

A coin toss will determine who gets the ball first in overtime. No game shall go beyond 20 points.

If a game is tied at 19 at the conclusion of 20 minutes, the first team to score in overtime shall be declared the winner.

Use the following examples for grades 7 and higher:

Score tied 16 to 16: First team to 18 wins

Score tied 19 to 19: First team to 20 wins (no game goes beyond 20)

Score is 12 to 11: No overtime needed since one team has a lead

17 Checked Ball

The ball must be “checked” by an opposing player before it is put into play. The check-in must occur behind the dashed take back line at the top of the key and not the out of bounds or end line. As always, the ball must be **passed (not rolled, not chucked)** to begin play. In games consisting of players entering grades 3 through 4 played on an 8 foot basket, the initial pass, if made behind the free-throw line extended, may not be contested by the opposing team. If the initial pass is made in front of the free-throw line extended, towards the basket, full defense may be played.

18 Change of Possession

The ball will change possession after scored baskets and all free-throw attempts with the exception of Technical or Intentional fouls (see rule 12 a, b, c). There will be no “make it, take it” rule.

19 Taking It Back

The ball will be “taken back” on each change of possession, regardless of whether or not a shot was attempted. Failure to “take it back” results in loss of possession and any points just scored. “Taking it back” means bringing your whole body and the ball behind the dashed “take-back” line (at the top of the key), not the sidelines or 2 point arc.

20 Ball Out-of-Bounds

A ball out-of-bounds will be taken out from behind the take back line.

21 Boundaries

The basket structure, padding, and structural supports will be played as out-of-bounds. The actual backboard, including its face, top, bottom and sides, shall be considered in-bounds.

22 Jump Ball

In a jump ball situation, the ball will first go to the team which lost the opening coin toss, with alternating possessions thereafter.

23 Dunking

Dunking is not allowed at any time, including during warm-ups. Dunking will be construed as an unsportsmanlike act and will result in a Technical foul.

24 Substitutions

Substitutions may only be made during a time-out or a “dead ball” situation.

25 Time-Out

Each team is allowed a single one minute time-out per game. The clock will stop running during a time-out.

26 Player Injury

A court monitor has the discretion to suspend play for the protection of an injured player. If a player is bleeding or has an open wound, that player will be directed to leave the game and properly bandage the wound. A player with any bloodstained clothing or bandage must remove the stained or saturated material prior to re-entering the game. If it is believed that a player has lost consciousness during a

game, or is severely injured, Hoops for Hearts may require a written note from a medical doctor who has examined the player subsequent to the game injury and specifically authorizes that player to continue participation in the tournament.

27 Game Times

All printed schedules are effective through only the first game for all teams. Following the tournament's first game, each team is required to check the Master Scoreboard for all official schedules, times, courts, revisions, and general game information. Teams must be ready to begin play at their scheduled start time. Teams not at their court for their scheduled game are given a 5 minute grace period before a forfeit is enforced. Hoops for Hearts shall not be responsible for any games lost due to forfeits. Teams are encouraged to remain in contact with their court to observe the effects of scheduling changes that could occur mainly due to inclement weather or other unexpected delays. Inclement weather and non-playable situations may result in the modification or cancellation of the event. Under these unlikely circumstances team entry fees will not be refunded.

28 The Fine Print

Designated tournament officials shall have the power to make decisions on any points not specifically covered in the Rules and Regulations and shall also have the complete authorization to interpret the intent and purpose of these Rules and Regulations. Hoops for Hearts officials also reserve the right to disqualify any player and/or team for infractions of tournament policies, including the following:

Use of Illegal Players

The players listed on the team entry form as accepted by Hoops for Hearts are the only ones eligible for play on that team. Player changes submitted on authorized Player Change Forms, and accepted by tournament officials, must be completed and approved by 8:00 a.m. on Aug 3, 2026. Under no circumstances will roster substitutions be allowed after the tournament begins. Before the beginning of the tournament every player will sign a Release and Waiver and Sportsmanship Pledge. Any team using a player not properly registered will be disqualified from the tournament.

False Information

Information provided on a team entry form or accepted Player Change Form is the basis for bracket scheduling and is expected to be both accurate and complete. Players listing inaccurate information on these forms may be disqualified from the tournament.