

TPC Upward Rules Summary 2026

1. Game Format & Rules for Game Play

- TPC has modified the game format and rules for game play included in the online “Coach Playbook” (posted on trinitysouthlake.org) and on your Coach Page (myupward.org).
- As a result, **this document constitutes the rules and game play format that will be used this season at TPC** (i.e. these rules supersede the Upward rules and game format).

2. Common Game Format and Rules For 1st-2nd Grade and 3rd-4th Grade Divisions

Common Game Format and Rules 1 st -2 nd Grade Division 3 rd -4 th Grade Division <i>Except where the following rules apply, play is governed by the National Federation of State High School Associations’ Rules Book (www.nfhs.org)</i>	
Game Format	Referees lead both teams in prayer at center court before every game. This sets the tone and focus for the game.
	A coin flip or other impartial method determines which team receives possession first.
	Games consist of six, 6-minute segments and an 8-minute halftime. One minute is allotted for substitutions between segments.
	At the end of each segment and in jump ball situations, possession will alternate based upon the direction of the possession arrow (as determined by the referees and/or scorekeeper).
	All coaches will adhere to the Upward substitution system. The substitution system allows for equal playing time for all players.
	There are no timeouts. This allows more playing time and keeps the games on time.
	Teams switch goals at halftime.
	Any game ending in a tie will remain a tie. No overtimes are played. No standings are maintained.
Rules for Play-Defense	Man-to-man defense will be played at all times. In a man-to-man defense, players are only guarding the opponent that closely matches their ability and height. This allows for a more competitive system for every player on the court while creating an equal opportunity for each player.
	Defensive players must stay within approximate arm’s reach of the player they are guarding, once that player enters the approximate “3-point area”. This prevents defenders from sagging or crowding an area of the court to gain a defensive advantage. After a warning to the player, a player violating this rule will be assessed a personal foul for subsequent violations.

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	<p>Double-teaming is not allowed. However, help defense is strongly encouraged in the following instances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lane Area: If a defender is in the lane and the player he or she is guarding is within arm's reach, the defender is allowed to provide help defense. Since many goals are scored in the lane, it provides the defense more opportunity to properly defend this area. • Picks and Screens: Defensive switching is allowed on offensive picks or screens. The non-screened defender can help his or her teammate by temporarily switching until the teammate recovers to defend their offensive player. This is commonly referred to as "help and recover." This prevents the offense from continually setting screens to gain an advantage. • Fast Breaks: When a transition begins in the backcourt and the offense quickly moves the ball up court, another defensive player may help. Upon stopping the fast break, defenders should return to guarding their assigned players. This rule is meant to prevent the defenders from helplessly watching the offensive player score without being able to help.
	<p>At the beginning of each segment, players will line up at half court and match-up with whom they are guarding using TPC's ROYGB color band process (discussed at Coach Training). This process promotes equal player match-ups. Equal match-ups combined with man-to-man defense help to create competitive pairings.</p>
	<p>Full court presses are not allowed. Defensive players may not guard their opponents in the backcourt.</p>
	<p>A player committing two fouls in one segment must sit out the remainder of that segment. The player nearest in skill level to the player fouling out comes in as the substitute for the remainder of the period. This does not change the normal rotation as the fouled-out player does not re-enter the game until they are next scheduled to do so. This rule allows the offending player time to regroup during the remainder of the segment while realizing that there is a consequence for the violation.</p>
<p>Rules for Play-Offense</p>	<p>The offense must purposefully attack the defense in every situation – no stalling. After a warning from the referee, a violation will be called resulting in a turnover. This will prevent a team with the lead from running the clock out by staying in the backcourt where the opponent is unable to play defense.</p> <p>Isolation plays are not allowed as they take away the opportunity for improvement for all players and contradict the spirit of the rules. For offense this prevents players being positioned at half court to isolate defenders away from the play.</p> <p>Non-shooting fouls result in the ball being in-bounded from the baseline or sideline.</p> <p>No score will be given for a basket in the wrong goal. It will be treated as a turnover and will be taken out along the baseline.</p>

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3. Game Format and Rule Modifications for 1st-2nd Grade Divisions (Modified Level 2)

Division(s)	Game Format / Rule
1 st -2 nd (Modified Level 2)	Goal Height: 8 feet
	Ball Size: 27.5"
	Score is <u>not</u> kept.
	<u>Clock Format:</u> Running clock throughout the game, stopping only for pre-determined substitutions at the end of each segment, halftime, and injuries.
	Shooting fouls do not result in free throw attempts. The ball will be played in from out-of-bounds, like a non-shooting foul.
	3-second violation <u>is not</u> called. Referees advise players to move through the lane.
	Due to the size of the court, backcourt violations (i.e. "over and back") will not be called.
	One Coach per team is allowed to walk the sidelines, to encourage and instruct players (coaches should not be on the court).
	Stealing the ball off a dribble or pass <u>is</u> allowed.
	Double dribble violation <u>is</u> called in all circumstances.
	Traveling violation <u>is</u> called in all circumstances (at the judgement of the referees minor feet shuffling in the act of shooting is allowed).
	Fast breaks are allowed in any transition situation.
	Players committing two fouls in one segment must sit out the remainder of that segment. Coaches track fouls and remove their own players (honor system).

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4. Game Format and Rule Modifications for 3rd-4th Grade Divisions (Modified Level 3)

Division(s)	Game Format / Rule
<p>3rd-4th (Modified Level 3)</p>	Goal Height: 9 feet
	Ball Size: 28.5"
	Score <u>is</u> kept (the score is reset to 0-0 at halftime).
	<u>Clock Format:</u> Running clock throughout the game, stopping only for pre-determined substitutions at the end of each segment, halftime, injuries, and fouls that result in free throws in the last minute of the game (see below).
	Free throws are awarded on all shooting fouls. Two shots are attempted by the fouled player at the 12ft line. A player must start their shooting motion behind the free throw line, but may step over the line as they finish their shot; however, running up to and over the line will not be allowed. Offense may have up to 2 players on the lane, not including the shooter. Defense may have up to 3 players on the lane. After the last free throw attempt, the ball becomes live.
	3-second violation <u>is</u> called and results in a turnover.
	Backcourt violations will be called and result in a turnover.
	One coach per team is allowed to stand in their coach box area to encourage and instruct players.
	Stealing the ball off a dribble or pass <u>is</u> allowed.
	Double dribble violation <u>is</u> called in all circumstances.
	Traveling violation is called <u>in</u> all circumstances.
	Fast breaks are allowed in any transition situation.
	<p>Clock runs continuously with special rules in effect <u>in the last minute</u> of the game:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The clock will stop on all fouls. • Two free throws are awarded on all fouls (regardless of if the player is in the act of shooting at the time of the foul)
<p>Players committing <u>two fouls</u> in one segment must sit out the remainder of that segment. Players will receive a wrist band with the first violation and any player with a wristband that commits a foul (i.e. their 2nd) will be removed for the remainder of the segment.</p>	

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5. Game Format and Rules for 5th-6th Grade Divisions (Modified Level 4)

Division(s)	Game Format / Rules for Play <i>Except where the following rules apply, play is governed by the National Federation of State High School Associations' Rules Book (www.nfhs.org)</i>
5th-6th (Modified Level 4)	Referees lead both teams in prayer at center court before every game. This sets the tone and focus for the game.
	Goal Height: 10 feet
	Ball Size: 28.5"
	Score <u>is</u> kept. The score is reset to 0-0 at halftime, providing teams an opportunity to "win" both the first and second half.
	Games consist of six, 6-minute segments and an 8-minute halftime. One minute is allotted for substitutions between segments (i.e. the "traditional" Upward format).
	<u>Clock format:</u> Running clock throughout the game, stopping only for fouls that result in free throws, timeouts, injuries, and the pre-determined substitution periods at the end of each segment.
	A jump ball is used to start the game.
	All coaches will adhere to the Upward Substitution System as detailed starting on page 117 of the "Coach Playbook". The substitution system allows for equal playing time for all players. However, the "color band" system will not be used. As a result, Coaches can determine which opposing players their players will defend.
	At the end of each segment and in jump ball situations, possession will alternate based upon the direction of the possession arrow (as determined by the referees and/or scorekeeper).
	Teams are allowed one (1) 30-second timeout per half (i.e. 1 per team per half).
	In regular season games, any game (or half) ending in a tie will remain a tie (i.e. no overtime periods).
	Zone and man-to-man defenses are allowed.
	Backcourt defense <u>is not</u> allowed.
Double teaming in the frontcourt (including half court traps) is allowed, except if a team has a 15-point advantage.	

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Coaches use the traditional "Coach's Box" (their side of the court).
All players are allowed five (5) fouls each game. After the 5th foul is committed, the player is disqualified for the remainder of the game.
Free throws are awarded on all shooting fouls (2 free throws per shooting foul).
After the <u>eight</u> team foul in each half, bonus free throws are awarded (2 shots).
On free throws a player must start their shooting motion behind the free throw line, but may step over the line as they finish their shot; however, running up to and over the line will not be allowed.
3-second lane violation is called and results in a turnover.
Backcourt violations will be called and result in a turnover.
10 second violations (i.e. offense must cross center court within 10 seconds) will be called and result in a turnover.
On inbounds plays 5 second violations (i.e. ball must be released) will be called and result in a turnover.
No score will be given for a basket in the wrong goal. It will be treated as a turnover and will be taken out along the baseline.
Standings will be kept to determine seeding for the Week 7 Tournament. Seeding determined by win-loss-tie (per half) record. Points against will be the tie breaker.