

BASKETBALL

HISTORY:

The game of basketball was actually developed to help condition football players during the winter months. In 1891 Dr. James Naismith, the physical education director at the YMCA College in Springfield, Massachusetts, introduced the game. The first basketball games were played with a soccer-style ball and peach baskets as the goals. Originally there was no limit to the number of players on a team or the number of balls used to play. It was not uncommon to have as many as 50 players on the floor using four or five balls at a time.

The first official game of basketball was not played until 1892, when Naismith developed 13 basic rules, some of which are still used today. The game and the rules were published in a YMCA magazine and distributed through-out the country. The game quickly became popular at other YMCA's, playgrounds, schools, colleges, and community centers.

By 1897, players were starting to be called by positions, but there was still no limit to the number who could play at once. The decision to limit players to five was not made until 1899.

From 1910 to 1923, each team had a standing and a running guard, two forwards, and a center. The standing guard was used for defense, like a soccer goalie. The running guard helped on defense and traveled into the offensive territory to aid the forwards in scoring. The standing forward was used primarily for offense and generally stayed on the offensive end of the court. The running forward often moved the length of the floor, helping not only in scoring but also in passing the ball to the standing forward.

The first intercollegiate basketball game was played in 1896 (Yale vs Connecticut Wesleyan), and in 1899 women formulated their own rules. The National Basketball Association and the National Collegiate Athletic Association now govern the rules of Basketball.

EQUIPMENT:

The basketball playing court is a rectangular surface, usually a hardwood floor, measuring 94 feet by 50 feet for college teams and 84 feet by 50 feet for high school teams. A backboard, 4 feet high by 6 feet wide, is located in the center of each end of the court. The basket is an open hammock net, suspended from the backboard by an 18 inch diameter metal rim. The rim must be 6 inches from the backboard and 10 feet from the ground. The basketball used by men weighs 20 to 22 ounces and has a circumference of 30 inches. The basketball used by women has a circumference of 29 inches and weighs 18 to 20 ounces. Balls are usually covered with leather, rubber, or synthetic material; an official ball is covered with leather.

SAFETY:

The primary safety concern in basketball is the ball; players must pay constant attention to the movement of the ball. Obstructions outside of the court, such as benches, walls, and equipment could be safety factors. In the game itself fouls must be called to safeguard players from personal injuries, and aggressive players must be held to the rules of the game.

RULES:

Basketball is played by two teams of five players consisting of two guards, two forwards, and a center. They attempt to outscore their opponents by passing, bouncing, handing, or dribbling the basketball into position for shooting the ball into their offensive basket.

An official puts the ball into play at the beginning of the game by tossing the ball in the air at midcourt while two players from opposing teams attempt to tip the ball to their respective teammates. Play continues until the designated time expires. The game is governed by a scorer, timer, and two or three floor officials.

A team scores a field goal when one of its players shoots the ball from the field into its offensive goal. A free throw is scored similarly, although play is stopped for the free throw shot. Two or 3 points are awarded for a field goal (depending on the distance from which the ball was shot), and 1 point for a free throw.

After each field goal the team not scoring puts the ball into play from the out-of-bounds behind the baseline near its own defensive basket. Each team attempts to get the ball into position to shoot it into its offensive basket by passing, dribbling, handing, or bouncing the ball. At the same time, the defensive team attempts to prevent the offensive team from scoring.

The game continues until either team commits a violation or foul, at which time the fouled player attempts a free throw or possession of the ball changes. A change of possession follows a violation, and the opposing team takes the ball out-of-bounds. When a foul is committed the opponents may either be given the opportunity to shoot one or two free throws or be awarded the ball out of bounds.

The team that has accumulated the highest number of points at the end of the game is the winner. Regulation basketball games consist of either 8-minute quarters (high school), 20 –minute halves (college), or 12-minute quarters (professional).