

2026 VFW YOUTH GROUP TOURNAMENT RULES AND REGULATIONS

(Tournament Rules are subject to change before 2026 VFW Tournament)

2026 PREFACE

Welcome to the 2026 VFW Youth Group Tournament!

Each year, our tournament brings together players, coaches, families and volunteers from across our basketball community for a weekend centered on competition, friendship and sportsmanship.

Our 2026 Tournament Rules reflect our continued commitment to providing a safe and fair environment for everyone involved. Updates and clarifications have been made to promote consistency across games while preserving the spirit and traditions that have made this tournament special for so many years.

We appreciate the time, effort and support of everyone who makes this tournament possible and hope our players enjoy the experience, build new friendships and create lasting memories both on and off the court.

We look forward to another great tournament!

Note: 2026 rule modifications are indicated in italicized font, except for wording clarifications.

Except for the items below, the VFW Post 3670 Youth Group Tournament will follow the National Federation of the State High School (NFHS) Basketball Rules.

1. Tournament Grade Level Division Coordinators have complete on-site authority for all tournament situations, including rules interpretations. Any unsportsmanlike behavior by anyone to include the player, coach, assistant coach, team representative, and spectator(s) at any time during the tournament game(s) can and will result in removal from the gym and/or other tournament activities at the discretion of the Grade Level Division Coordinator and/or the Tournament Chair and/or Tournament Committee.
2. Court Commissioners have complete authority of rule interpretations and will monitor tournament games to ensure rule compliance, handle disputes, oversee game flow and fair play, support referees and help to enforce tournament specific rules.
3. If the coach is under the age of 21, an adult must be on the Players Bench. The adult must be a certified coach and the coaches are responsible for the conduct of the team. He or she must be on the bench the entirety of the game.
4. Absolutely no smoking while on school grounds property including parking lots. Smoking includes cigars, cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, e-cigarettes, vape devices or products, etc. Any violations of this policy, will mean expulsion from the tournament and forfeiture of all prior game(s). Violator(s) must immediately leave the premises.
5. Absolutely no consumption of alcoholic beverages on school grounds property including parking lots. Any violations of this policy, will mean expulsion from the tournament and forfeiture of all prior game(s). Violator(s) must immediately leave the premises.

GAME RULES

1. Rosters

- a) All players must be league rostered from the previous season or will be on the league roster in the upcoming season.
- b) Players may be added or dropped from the roster up until two (2) weeks prior to the first tournament game. Players added must get the approval from the Grade Level Division Coordinator and/or the Boys or Girls Commissioner. Player add fees will be applicable on all player adds.
- c) Minimum rostered players is six (6) to add a player. Player add fee is still applicable. If the roster is at 7 and the team wants to add player(s), player(s) cannot be "impact player(s)" and the decisions will be made by the Grade Level Division Coordinator and player add fees are applicable.
- d) Players are not allowed to be on multiple (more than 1) rosters or team(s). If this violation occurs, player(s) and coach(es) involved will be expelled from the tournament, forfeiture of games in which the player in question plays and possible future tournament eligibility will be impacted (up to 12 months).
- e) If a player plays under "an assumed name" or if the team uses an ineligible player, it will result in an automatic forfeiture for the team in which the player in question plays and immediate suspension from current and future VFW Tournaments and/or other tournaments for up to 12 months.
- f) Rosters can have more than 10 players listed, but a maximum of 10 awards will be given. If less than 10, the amount of names on the roster will be awarded.
- g) Rosters can include a maximum of two (2) higher grade level players on the team if they are not "impact player(s)" and still be playing in the grade level below. Higher grade level means no more than one (1) grade up. The Grade Level Division Coordinator has the final decision.
- h) No additions to the roster will be allowed during the tournament.

2. Game Time

- a) All games will be twenty (20) minute halves, running time.
 - i) The final 15 seconds of the first half will be stop time.
 - ii) The final two (2) minutes of regulation will be stop time unless the point spread is greater than the following by grade levels (determined at the 2 minute mark for the rest of the game).
 - 1. 3rd - 4th grade boys and girls: point spread is greater than 15 points
 - 2. 5th - 12th grade boys and girls: point spread is greater than 20 points
- b) 10 second backcourt rule will apply to all divisions, except high school girls, if using a shot-clock.
- c) Overtime
 - i) 1st overtime period is two (2) minutes stop-time.
 - ii) The 2nd overtime period is sudden death.
 - iii) Jump ball to start overtime periods.
- d) Delayed Start of Game
 - i) There is an automatic forfeit if a team does not arrive within ten (10) minutes after the scheduled start time of the game.
 - ii) Each team must have 5 players to begin the game.
- e) Time Outs
 - i) Two (2) full time outs and two (2) 30-second timeouts per game.
 - ii) One (1) additional time out for the 1st overtime period.

- iii) No additional time outs given if in sudden death.
- iv) Time outs are cumulative for the overtime periods.
- v) **Exceptions:** Applies only to the divisions where backcourt pressure is prohibited.
 - 1. 10-second count will resume from the last counted second before timeout was called.
 - 2. Once the ball has advanced to the frontcourt, the ball may enter the backcourt, but the “no backcourt rule” does not apply after the initial crossing of half court.

3. Hoop Height

- a) 10 feet for all ages/divisions

4. Backcourt Pressure

- a) Backcourt pressure is prohibited for the boys and girls 3rd/4th grade divisions.
- b) Backcourt pressure is allowed for 5th grade boys and girls only when the lead is < 25 points.
- c) When backcourt press is prohibited,
 - i) Game official(s) will give two (2) warnings to the defensive team for violation and thereafter a technical will be assessed for each violation
 - ii) Once the ball has advanced to the frontcourt, the ball may enter the backcourt, but the “no backcourt pressure” rule does not apply after the initial crossing of half court.

5. Shot Clock

- a) Shot Clock is permitted from grades 9th to 12th for Boy’s and Girl’s Divisions at the discretion of the coaches, provided that a shot clock is available.
- b) A Head coach, anytime during the game, can request the shot clock be turned on.
- c) Once the shot clock is functional, it remains on throughout the remainder of the game, including any overtimes or sudden death.
- d) Boy’s 9th to 12th grade divisions have a 35 second shot clock.
- e) Girls 9th to 12th grade divisions have a 30 second shot clock and no 10-second backcourt rule
- f) Shot clock reset parameters will follow the NFHS/CIF rules for boys and girls.

6. Personal & Team Fouls

- a) Players are ejected from the game on the fifth (5th) personal foul.
- b) Bonus fouls (1 + 1) apply on the seventh (7th) team foul for each half.
- c) On the tenth (10th) team foul per half, bonus foul shots are automatic two (2) free throw shots.
- d) All Technical Fouls are Personal Fouls with the exception of uniform violations.

7. Playing Time Requirements

- a) Players are required to play each half.
- b) If a player arrives late, his or her participation will be at the coach’s discretion.
- c) The Grade Level Division Coordinator/Court Commissioner must be advised if the player is held out because of disciplinary reason(s).
- d) Non-compliance will result in game forfeiture.
- e) Scorekeepers will keep track of players playing each half by marking it on the score sheets.

8. Player Equipment & Safety

- a) Absolutely no wearing of jewelry or wearable technology during the game (example: rings, earrings, studs, bracelets, necklaces, etc. or any other items that could potentially cause injury to the player wearing them or to other players) as per NFHS/CIF guidelines.
- b) Hair accessories guidelines will also follow the NFHS/CIF rules.

- c) Medical and religious medals and devices are not considered jewelry and will also follow the NFHS/CIF guidelines.
- d) *Fingernails that, in the judgment of the referee, constitute a safety concern must be corrected before the player may participate or return to play.*
- e) *Any player not in compliance with the applicable NFHS/CIF safety requirements must correct the condition before participating or returning to play.*

9. Player, Coach, Parent and Spectator Conduct & Behavior

- a) **General Conduct Rule:** All conduct and behavior rules outlined throughout this document apply not only during games but also extend to all locations relevant to activities organized as part of the tournament. This includes, but is not limited to, parking lots, social events, and any other area where tournament-related activities occur. The expectation is that all participants, including players, coaches, team representatives and spectators, uphold the highest standards of sportsmanship and conduct at all times, across all tournament venues.
- b) **Comprehensive Conduct Policy:** At the discretion of the Tournament Committee, Grade Level Division Coordinators, Court Commissioners, and officials, any participant (player, coach, parent, spectator) found guilty of serious conduct and behavior issues resulting in severe penalties such as ejection, suspension, forfeiture, or expulsion will be prohibited from participating in any subsequent tournament activities. This includes all remaining games, social events, award ceremonies, and any other activities organized as part of the tournament.
- c) Only registered coaches will be allowed on the bench.
- d) Parents or other spectators are not allowed to approach the bench or scorekeepers table.
- e) Any player, coach, parent or spectator misconduct will result in disqualification at the discretion of the Referee(s) and/or the Grade Level Division Coordinator or Court Commissioner and violator(s) may be asked to immediately leave the premises. Failure to comply may result in forfeiture and expulsion from the tournament.
Any team disqualified for misconduct will not be eligible for any team awards.
- f) Unsportsmanship behavior, which includes the use of profanity, will result in ejection from the gym. The person must leave the premises. Failure to do so will result in forfeiture and expulsion from the tournament and possible future tournaments.
- g) The conduct of the players, parents and spectators is the sole responsibility of the coach. Coaches can be assessed technical fouls for misconduct.
- h) Any coach ejected from a game will be suspended for the remainder of the tournament games and possibly future tournaments for up to 12 months.
- i) Trash Talking, Threats, Taunting and Fighting (including intent) will not be tolerated:
 - i) Depending on the level of severity and number of occurrences, penalties can range from a warning (1st offense only), technical/flagrant foul, ejection, suspension from the current tournament and future tournaments (up to 12 months), forfeiture and expulsion.
 - ii) Penalty applied will be at the discretion of the tournament officials:
 - 1. **Warning (1st offense only):** at the discretion of any tournament official.
 - 2. **Technical/flagrant foul:** at the discretion of the referee or Court Commissioner.
 - 3. **Ejections, Suspensions and Forfeitures:** at the discretion of the Grade Level Division Coordinators and will generally follow the recommendations of the referee(s) and/or Court Commissioner.
 - 4. **Expulsions:** at the discretion of the Tournament Chair & Committee and will generally follow the recommendation of the referee(s), Court Commissioner and/or Grade Level Division Coordinator(s).
 - iii) Definitions:

1. **Ejection:** player, coach, parent, or spectator is removed from the game and premises
 2. **Suspension:** player, coach, parent, or spectator is temporarily banned from participating in one or more future games
 3. **Forfeiture:** team is disqualified or cannot continue playing, leading to an automatic loss of the game
 4. **Expulsion:** permanent ban from participating in VFW tournaments and possibly other tournaments
- j) Bench Clearing
- i) WILL NOT BE TOLERATED and will result in expulsion from the tournament.
- k) Suspensions
- i) Any player or coach disqualified for inappropriate behavior will be automatically suspended from participating in the next tournament game.
 - ii) A player receiving two (2) technical fouls will be ejected from the game and will not be allowed to participate in the team's next tournament game.
 - iii) A coach receiving two (2) technical fouls will be ejected from the game and will not be allowed to participate in the team's next tournament game. This action may also result in the team forfeiting the game and tournament – this will be at the discretion of the Court Commissioner and/or the Tournament Committee.
 - iv) Any coach ejected from a game will be suspended for the remainder of the tournament games and possibly future tournaments for up to 12 months.

10. Protests

- a) Protests will be heard and ruled on by the Grade Level Division Coordinator/Court Commissioner at the time of occurrence. Grade Level Division Coordinators/Court Commissioners have complete on-site authority for all tournament situations including rules interpretations. Their decision(s) are final.

11. Team Uniforms

- a) Home team is the first team listed on the schedule or designated by the Grade Level Division Coordinator/Court Commissioner. The home team will wear "white" uniforms.
- b) Teams must have the same uniforms (example: light and dark uniforms) with PERMANENT number on the front and back.
- c) No masking tape or other tape material of uniform numbers will be allowed which will result in a technical foul (automatic 2-points to the other team at the start of the game).
- d) Undershirts are allowed and NOT required to be the same color of the jersey or same color for all team members.

12. **NO FOOD OR BEVERAGES** (example: sports drinks, soda, coffee, ice tea) are allowed inside the gyms. **WATER ONLY** is allowed or permitted.

13. **NO ANIMALS** are allowed in the gym with the exception of service animals.

14. Awards

- a) 4-team Pools
 - i) 1st and 2nd place will receive awards
- b) 6-team Pools
 - i) 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place will receive awards
- c) 7-team Hybrid Pool/Bracket
 - i) 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place will receive awards

- d) 8-team Bracket
- i) 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and Consolation will receive awards

15. Tie Breaker Rules – SEPARATE DOCUMENT

16. Ball Size

- a) BOYS
 - 3rd Grade Size 5 (Youth) - 27.5"
 - 4th Grade Size 6 (Women's) - 28.5"
 - 5th Grade Size 6 (Women's) - 28.5"
 - 6th–12th Grade Size 7 (Men's) - 29.5"
- b) GIRLS
 - 3rd Grade Size 5 (Youth) - 27.5"
 - 4th Grade Size 6 (Women's) - 28.5"
 - 5th Grade Size 6 (Women's) - 28.5"
 - 6th–12th Grade Size 6 (Women's) - 28.5"
- c) Grade Level Division Coordinator/Court Commissioner or referee(s) will select the game ball

17. Free Throws

- a) BOYS & GIRLS
 - 3rd Grade 10' marking (CAN cross)
 - 4th Grade Regulation Line (CAN cross)
 - 5th Grade Regulation Line (CAN cross *but cannot take unfair advantage*)
 - 6th–12th Grade Regulation Line (CANNOT cross)

The Tournament Committee, Grade Level Division Coordinators and Court Commissioners reserve the right to move teams to a higher or lower division in order to promote a more balanced and competitive tournament.

All other rules will be the same as the National Federation of the State High School Association (NFHS).