

WBA Playing Time Policy for Coaches

● **Playing Time** - As a WBA coach, your responsibilities are to teach the game of basketball, teach what it means to be a good teammate, and teach sportsmanship in an environment that is fun and safe. Everyone, including the kids, wants to win. But the cost of winning must not lead to situations where kids are denied the opportunity to develop and display their skills during elementary and middle school travel games. More often than not, losing a game or making a mistake in a close game provide the most enduring teaching moments - for players, coaches, and all concerned. Do not lose sight of the fact that this is NOT high school basketball.

Along those lines, the policy of the WBA is to evenly distribute playing time during games. On “B” or “C” level teams in any grade, this policy is non-negotiable. At the “A” level at the younger grades (4, 5, and 6), the goal is also to distribute playing time in a balanced manner. Importantly, as discussed further below, this does not mean that anyone should use a stopwatch to measure playing time. A better measure is to consider whether time is evenly distributed over the course of a few games.

As players emerge in middle school - particularly in Grades 7 and 8 - and “A” teams play in higher level divisions, given the level of competition and the fact that they are closer to entering high school, playing time in Metrowest League games may not be evenly distributed. That said, “A” team coaches in Grades 7 and 8 MUST make every effort to provide MEANINGFUL playing time to ALL players on their roster (a minimum of 10-12 minutes per game is a reasonable goal).

Further, at ANY GRADE OR DIVISION LEVEL, during the last four (4) minutes of a very close game, coaches may exercise their discretion in determining the five (5) players on the court who they believe will give the team the best chance to win that game. This discretion should be exercised on occasion - NOT ROUTINELY. When a player’s time is reduced for this reason, it is good practice to “make up” that time in a future game (e.g., a non-league game or a “blowout” win or loss).

Exceptions to the Playing Time Policy at any grade level or division may be made by individual coaches if a player misses multiple practices or games (except for medical reasons) or in the event of serious behavioral issues. Before adjusting playing time for individual players, consultation between and among the coach, Age Group Coordinator, and the player’s family is required. Decisions made in these categories should be escalated to the WBA president as well.