



## Miniball Program

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The Hawks Miniball Program is designed to help beginner basketballers to become familiar with the concepts, skills and rules of playing basketball in a safe environment with minimal emphasis placed on winning. As our season progresses we review the group that each team is playing in to ensure that the teams are reasonably evenly matched. This results in 3 formal regrades throughout the season. The logic behind this is that kids new to any sport progress at different rates and by having set regarding dates we can move teams around to help all players progress to the best of their ability.

Our miniball program also plays under modified rules, designed to keep the game flowing, but also making it easier for players to execute their newly learned skills. Specifically, miniball is played with the following modifications to regular basketball

- Low backboards
- Size 5 ball
- The referees may call for a substitution in the case of shoe laces needing retying.
- Free throws taken from a line 1200 mm in front of the free throw line.
- Three-point shots: For all games with low backboards successful shots from outside the three point line will only score 2 points.
- No Zone Defence allowed or double teaming in the back court

Note that we do not ask our referees to implement this last point. To a large extent referees controlling these games are also developing their skills (but as a referee!), so we leave control of the last point to our Games Controller and Referee Supervisors.

In addition to the above modifications we apply the following rules:

- No cross court (or over and back) violation.
- No 3 second rule.
- **Half court defence:** No double teaming in the back court is allowed by the defensive team. PENALTY: Offence receives the ball back at the advance mark in the front court opposite the team benches.
- **Reaching across on the ball handler:** The defence is not allowed to reach across from the side in order to try steal the ball. This is to encourage good defence by getting the defence to get in front and establish a legal guarding position. PENALTY: This will be treated as a violation, and the offense will receive the ball from the sideline as appropriate. Should a foul occur however, a foul shall still be called and the penalty of that foul shall outweigh the penalty defined here.

- **Interpretation of Rules:** Referees are asked to be helpful to the young players and to explain their calls where necessary. The referees are asked to show tolerance concerning violations which do not allow too much advantage.

#### **Examples of interpretation**

- Leniency on travelling in back court after a score.
  - When a player has obviously stepped over the line when attempting to put the ball into play blow the whistle, stop them, explain, and let them do it properly.
- **Mercy Rule:** If a team reaches a 20 point lead they will be required to only play defence in the front court. If the lead reduces to below 15 they will then be allowed to return to full court defence. **PENALTY:** Should a referee coach or PLHBA official be made aware of a violation to this rule, they shall inform the coach that half-court defence must be played. Failure to adhere to this rule is considered a violation of the Fair Play Policy and penalties shall be applied in accordance with this policy.
  - **Coach participation:** Coaches are encouraged to take an active part in helping their players to learn. This, at times, will involve them stepping onto the floor to help get players organised. We recommend that coaches talk to the referees (and referee supervisors) prior to each game and discuss how to handle this.

### The Dots

Perhaps one of the bigger issues that we face in getting young players to understand how to play basketball is getting them to understand the importance of spacing. There is a tendency for all players to flock to the ball as they all want to get it! To help address this we are introducing a set of dots to each half of the court.

Whenever a ball is being passed in from out of bounds all players (other than the passer and their defender!) must move to a dot. There can be a maximum one player from each team at each dot. Once players have reached the dots they may take it in turn to lead to the ball. If they do not receive the ball from the passer they must then return to a dot and allow another player to lead to the ball.

This system automatically creates a space between the passer and the other players which will make it easier to pass the ball in. Further, once players understand that they cannot hang around waiting for the ball, the space will be maintained and this will make getting the ball onto play we be easier.

The dots can also be used to maintain spacing as the ball progresses down the court. Players are to be encouraged to run through the dots into the open space to receive the next pass. Again this creates space around the ball and allows players to develop their ball handling skills without 9 other players crowding around them.

Miniball coaches are encouraged to train their players in using the dots and to understand that when “DOTS” is called from the sideline, they all must move to a dot before play can recommence. In the early weeks this is an instance where coaches may need to step on to the floor to help get the kids organised.

Note that this initiative is not being implemented as a rule, but rather a guideline to help the players better learn the concept of spacing.

