



## **Upward Basketball** Referee Handbook



©2009 Upward Unlimited.

Upward® and Upward Flag Football™ are registered trademarks of Upward Unlimited. Upward Soccer,™ Upward Cheerleading,™ Upward Unlimited,™ Upward Basketball®, Upward Soccer Camp,™ Upward Basketball Camp,™ Upward Cheerleading Camp,™ and the Upward Star Logo are trademarks of Upward Unlimited. All rights reserved.



## Table of Contents

### ***Table of Contents***

Mission and Values of Upward .....	4
------------------------------------	---

### ***Section One:***

#### ***Refereeing Upward Basketball***

Becoming an Upward Referee .....	6
Communicating with Coaches and Players .....	6
Controlling the Game .....	8

### ***Section Two:***

#### ***Calling the Game***

Positioning and Responsibilities .....	12
Fouls/Violations Hand Signals .....	15
Other Hand Signals .....	19

### ***Section Three:***

#### ***Rules Unique to Upward Basketball***

Game Format .....	22
Rules for Play .....	24
What to Watch For .....	29
Notes .....	31-32



## ***Introduction***

***Welcome to Upward Basketball!*** This handbook is designed to provide you with what you need to be successful as a referee in the Upward Basketball Ministry. The information on the following pages is intended to guide you through your responsibilities, how to officiate a game, as well as the Rules Unique to Upward Basketball.

For all Upward refereeing needs,  
***visit [www.upward.org/upwardreferee](http://www.upward.org/upwardreferee).***

This website has been created to equip you as an Upward referee and is only accessible through this URL. You will find the Rules Unique to Upward Basketball, frequently asked questions, game situations and scenarios and much more.





## **MISSION STATEMENT**

To introduce children to Jesus Christ  
by creating opportunities to serve through sports.

## **VALUES**

### ***The Expectation of God Moments***

*We believe that God is at work all around us.*

### ***The Life of Integrity***

*We believe that how we live is more important than what we say.*

### ***The Discipline of Excellence***

*We believe in serving that exceeds expectations.*

### ***The Priority of Children***

*We believe that Every Child Is A Winner.*



**Section One:**  
Refereeing Upward Basketball



## ***Becoming an Upward Referee***

As an Upward Basketball referee, you have an incredible opportunity to make a difference in the life of a child and his or her family. Referees should be committed to promoting character, self-esteem and fun to each and every player. Remember that Upward Basketball is not just another basketball league. It is a ministry! A major difference in this ministry is the role of the referee. Upward Basketball referees represent the highest form of authority on the court. This authority is demonstrated as you, an Upward referee, assume the responsibility of communicating right and wrong to players. You also act as an extension of the coach as you teach and encourage players while officiating. One of the biggest differences between Upward Basketball and other leagues is the actions and attitudes of the officials.

Upward Basketball is governed by a set of rules unique to Upward Basketball, which include game format, rules for game play, and a substitution system. These rules are intended to promote character and self-esteem. As a referee it is your responsibility to know and uphold these rules. Please see page 21 for the rules for Upward Basketball.

## ***Communicating with Coaches and Players***

Upward Basketball promotes the building of relationships with coaches, players, and family members. Communication is a key component of establishing sound relationships.



## ***Communicating with Coaches***

Pre-game time is your opportunity to set the tone for the game and communicate with coaches. Arrive at the game early enough to get to know the coaches and to do the following:

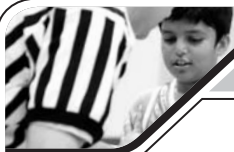
- › Introduce yourself to the coaches. Tell them your name, where you attend church, and what you do for a living.
- › Ask the coaches where they work and where they attend church.
- › Ask them questions about their season and seek input about their concerns or suggestions.

Right before the game begins, gather both teams and their coaches for a brief word of encouragement and prayer. This also serves as a time to remind players and coaches about game rules, common violations, and the spirit of Upward Basketball. Encourage players and coaches to do their best to honor God with their actions and attitudes.

*Here are a few things to discuss during this pre-game gathering:*

- › Be sure all players have their jerseys tucked in their shorts.
- › Check to see that each player has his or her shoes tied tightly.
- › Have players remove all jewelry.
- › Give reminders for game play (no defense in the back-court, man-to-man defense, three-second violations, etc.). As coaches and teams exit the court for halftime, take this opportunity to set the tone and make adjustments for the second half. Based on the action in the first half, let coaches know what things you will be looking for when play resumes.





## Section One: Refereeing Upward Basketball

### ***Communicating with Players***

As an Upward Basketball referee, you serve as an on-the-floor coach, teacher, and encourager. It is the referee's job to talk to players during the game. Communicating with players during play will help them improve their game on the court. Often the referee can stop a violation before it happens by talking to the players. Commands like "out of the lane 33," "watch the pushing," or "pass or shoot – no dribbling" can keep the game moving and make it more enjoyable for all. Players, parents, and coaches will appreciate a referee who is committed to both officiating and teaching.

Be sure to encourage players. This will go a long way toward building players' self-esteem. Since referees are out on the court with the players, they have the perfect opportunity to encourage them. Words of praise, high-fives, or clapping hands are all effective ways to build children's confidence and to reward them for doing their best.

### ***Controlling the Game***

The referee must keep the game under control. The best way to do this is to blow the whistle sharply to stop play, calling fouls and violations when they occur. Anytime play should be stopped, both referees should blow their whistles.

Any rough play should be stopped immediately. If rough play is not stopped quickly, it will escalate and undermine the purpose of this league. Keeping the game under control will create a safe environment for which both coaches and parents will be grateful.



### ***Managing Substitutions***

Substitutions take place between each six-minute segment. Before the start of each six-minute segment, player match-ups occur at mid-court. The coaches will match players up against someone of equal ability. While this process is the coaches' job, you will serve as a monitor. If both coaches and referees foresee a match-up problem due to position and height, players can be shuffled around to create a better game situation. This should be done only when all parties agree to the change.

Remember to keep the substitution time moving. Remind coaches that this is not a coaching opportunity. Substitution time is not a time when coaches should be talking to players about strategy. The whole process should take only about a minute.





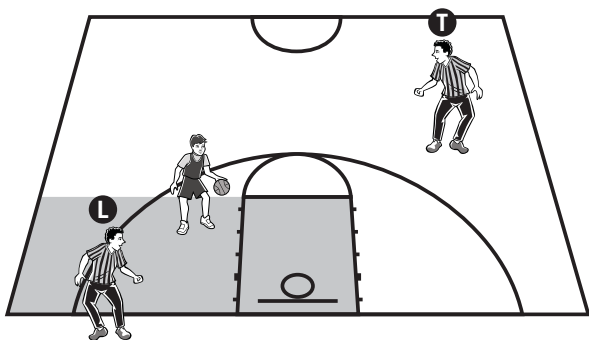


## Section Two: Calling the Game



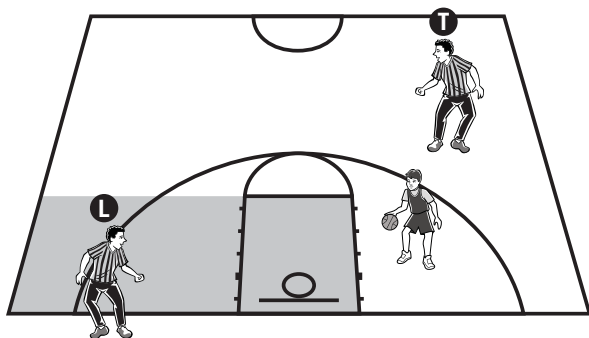
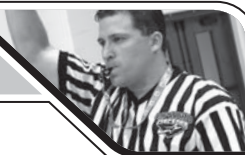
### ***Positioning and Responsibilities***

You can't call what you don't see. Refereeing at any level is about being in the right position. This requires good communication between you and your partner. Each game will require two referees that alternate as lead and trail duties with each change of possession. The lead referee is the first official down the court and positions himself along the baseline in the near court. The trail official positions himself diagonally from the lead in the near court beyond the top of the key or three point line. During a change of possession, the lead and trail officials switch, making the lead the new trail and the trail the new lead.

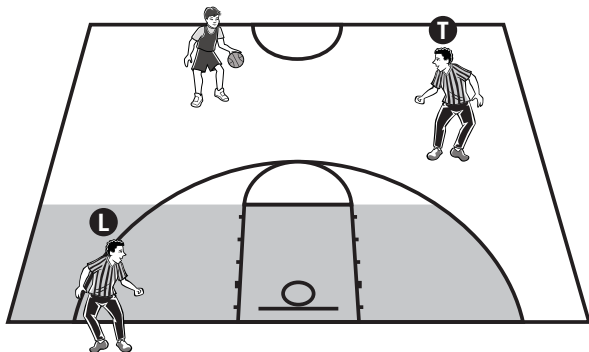


In the above diagram, the lead official has on-ball coverage (shaded area) because that official is near the ball. The trail official is off the ball and covers the rest of the court. The lead official's coverage area extends to the free-throw line and includes the entire free-throw lane.

## Section Two: Calling the Game



If the ball moves outside the lead official's coverage area, the trail official then assumes on-ball coverage, and the lead official's coverage is now off the ball (see above).



Above, you can see that the ball has now moved up high near midcourt on the lead official's side. In this situation, the trail official has ball coverage, and the lead official has off-ball coverage. The lead official's coverage area has now extended beyond the free-throw lane. This extended coverage helps the trail focus on the action occurring around the ball.





## Section Two: Calling the Game

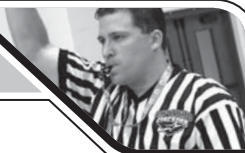
### ***Responsibilities of both referees:***

- › Watch for fouls and violations (traveling, double dribble, etc.)
- › Watch down the sideline and baseline
- › Administer free throws (help line up players along the lane if necessary)
- › Administer dead ball throw-ins (baseline or sideline)
- › Blow the whistle to end the play. When one referee blows the whistle, the other should blow the whistle as well.

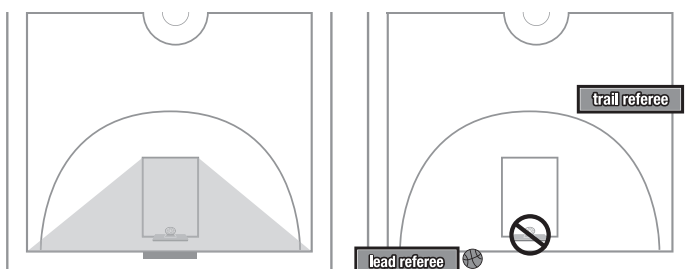
If you desire to be a quality referee, there are four common positioning traps to ***avoid***:

- › *Both officials stay in the trail position or on opposite sidelines* – If this occurs, there is no way to make an accurate call on action “in the paint” or near the baseline.
- › *Both officials watching the ball* – If this happens, who is watching action away from the ball? The only time the lead official watches the ball is when the ball is in his or her area. The lead official does not watch the ball if it is in the trail official’s area or the perimeter area.
- › *Being lazy* – Doing one’s best is a big part of Upward Basketball. This effort is expected from the coaches, players, and the referees. Remember, hustle up and down the floor the entire game to get in the proper position to make the call. This will make your job as well as your partner’s job much easier.

## Section Two: Calling the Game



- › *Allowing the ball to be thrown-in under the basket –*  
If action is stopped from the free-throw line corners to the baseline corners, the ball should be thrown-in along the baseline closest to the stopped action. Never allow the basketball to be thrown-in directly under the basket or parallel to the lane area. (see diagrams below)



### ***Fouls/Violations Hand Signals***

Often times, referees will blow the whistle to signal either a foul or a violation. In order to make this call, you must be able to recognize not only what represents a foul or violation, but also what the appropriate hand signals are for each. Remember, coaches, parents, and players want to know why the whistle was blown. Using proper hand signals is an effective way to communicate what is happening on the court. Below is the definition of a foul and a violation as well as their basic hand signals. Please view the Upward Basketball Referee DVD as well as the website ([www.upward.org/upwardreferee](http://www.upward.org/upwardreferee)) for demonstrations of the following hand signals.

A **foul** is defined as any illegal contact made between a player and his/her opponent. A personal foul can be committed by an offensive or defensive player. When a foul is committed, the referee should blow the whistle sharply and raise their fist high in the air above the head. The hand signal that follows details the type of foul that was committed.



## Section Two: Calling the Game

*Below are the different types of fouls and their proper hand signal:*

### **Hand Check**

Using the hands to check the progress of an offensive player when that player is in front of the defender who is using the hands.

- › *Signal: Face one palm away from the body as the other hand grabs the wrist.*

### **Holding**

Foul involving grabbing onto the arm, hand or wrist of the offensive player.

- › *Signal: Hold one arm at a 90-degree angle with fist turned with knuckles facing outward as the other hand grabs the wrist.*

### **Blocking**

Illegal contact which impedes the progress of an opponent. A blocking foul is called when the defender blocks with the body and his/her position is not clearly established.

- › *Signal: Place both hands on hips.*

### **Player Control Foul (Offensive Foul)**

A foul called when an offensive player runs into a defender who has an established position (both feet are in a stationary position).

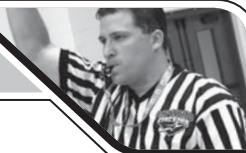
- › *Signal: Place one hand behind the head at a 90-degree angle.*

### **Pushing**

A foul in which a defender pushes or shoves an offensive player in order to impede his/her movement or progress.

- › *Signal: Sign a pushing motion with both palms facing opposite the chest.*

## Section Two: Calling the Game



A **violation** is defined as an infraction of the rules by the offensive team that does not result in a free throw; the ball is turned over to the opposing team for a throw in. If there is a violation, the referee should blow the whistle sharply, and raise an open hand high in the air above the head. Then the referee should make the appropriate hand signal that corresponds to the violation being committed.

In younger leagues, quickly gather the players together and explain the violation, how it can be avoided, and the result of the violation. The extent of this explanation will vary according to the age and understanding of the players. Ideally, violation explanations will decrease as the season progresses.

*The following are definitions of common violations and their proper hand signals:*

### **Traveling**

When the ball handler takes too many steps or moves the pivot foot without dribbling.

› **Signal:** Rotate clenched fists and forearms around each other.

### **Double Dribble**

Occurs when a player stops dribbling and then dribbles again without giving up possession, or when a player dribbles the ball with both hands at the same time.

› **Signal:** Sign a patting motion in front of the body with one hand at a time.





## Section Two: Calling the Game

### ***Palming or Carrying the Ball***

When a player moves his/her hand under the ball and scoops it while dribbling.

- › *Signal: Hold one arm to the side of the body as the other hand waves back and forth in a side-to-side motion.*

### ***Three-Seconds (3rd through 6th grade ONLY)***

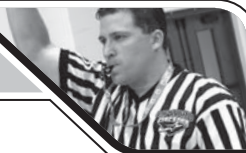
An offensive player can spend no more than three consecutive seconds within the free throw lane. Keep in mind that each time a shot attempt is made, the three second count starts over.

- › *Signal: Hold three fingers up in the air at shoulder level, then waving hand from shoulder to waist.*

After the play has ended, the referee should address what occurred by:

- › Quickly explaining the violation/foul to the players by telling them how it can be avoided and the result of the infraction. The extent of the explanation will vary according to the age and understanding of the players and should decrease as the season progresses.
- › Communicating whether the consequence results in alternating possession (violation or non-shooting foul) or free throw attempts (shooting foul).

## Section Two: Calling the Game



### ***Other Hand Signals***

Along with signaling fouls and violations, you must be familiar with two other important hand signals that are used frequently in Upward Basketball:

#### ***Direction of play***

This hand signal should be used after a foul, violation, or any dead ball change of possession to indicate direction in which the ball will be going.

- › *Signal: Point outstretched arm in the direction the ball will be going.*

#### ***Jump Ball***

This call is made when two players from opposing teams have equal possession of the ball without a foul or violation being committed.

- › *Signal: Blow the whistle sharply, raise both hands straight up in the air, above the head, with thumbs raised*

To promote proper basketball skills and understanding of the game, referees should call all fouls and violations. Failing to call these infractions creates confusion among players and hinders their understanding of the game.







**Section Three:**  
Rules Unique to Upward Basketball





## Section Three: Rules Unique to Upward Basketball

The game format and rules for game play which are unique to Upward Basketball are designed to recognize that *Every Child Is A Winner* by promoting character and self-esteem.

**\*\*The "why" behind each rule is stated in this font. \*\***

### ***Game Format***

A unique element of Upward's Basketball ministry is the game format:

- › Referees lead both teams and cheerleaders in prayer at center court before every game. **This sets the tone and focus for the game.**
- › Games consist of two 18-minute halves and an eight-minute halftime. **Keeps games to approximately a 45-minute time frame. This allows games that are scheduled on the hour to begin and end on time.**
- › A coin toss or other impartial method determines which team receives possession first. In jump-ball situations, possessions will alternate. **This promotes fairness for both teams while adhering to NFHS rule for jump ball situations.**
- › During each six-minute segment the clock runs continuously stopping only at the end of each segment for predetermined substitutions. **This allows coaches to line up and match substitutions based on height and ability without wasting valuable game time. This time should not be treated as a timeout. This is a great time for cheerleaders to do a quick cheer!**
- › No timeouts are used in Upward Basketball. **This allows more playing time and keeps the games on time.**



- › At the end of each six-minute segment, the team that receives the ball next is based upon the direction of the possession arrow. Therefore, an end-of-the-period shot is encouraged. **Players and spectators enjoy seeing a last second shot attempt. It also avoids the offensive team that will have possession in the next segment from stalling at the end of a period.**
- › Teams switch goals after halftime. **This is in compliance with NFHS Rules. Also, this evens any advantage that may occur because of the court.**
- › Cheerleaders will perform during halftime, but will never replace the halftime devotion. **This gives the cheerleaders the opportunity to briefly perform the cheers they have learned in front of all spectators, without taking time away from the devotion speaker**
- › No scores are kept in the K5 or first- and second-grade divisions. **The focus for this age is to learn fundamentals, not winning and losing.**
- › Any games ending in a tie should remain a tie. **No overtimes are played so games stay on schedule.**
- › No league standings are maintained in any league. **Standings add unneeded pressures to the game.**
- › Coaches are allowed to walk the sidelines and encourage their players without stepping in the playing area. K5 coaches are allowed on the court with the players. **The focus is to instruct and encourage players at all times.**
- › All coaches will adhere to the substitution system as detailed below and on the following page. **The substitution system allows for equal playing time for all players**





## ***Rules for Play***

Except where the Rules Unique to Upward apply, play is governed by the National Federation of State High School Associations' Rules Book ([www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org)).

1. Man-to-man defense will be played at all times. Zone defenses are not allowed. In most cases, while playing 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.**
2. Defensive players must stay within arm's reach of the player they're guarding. (Isolation plays are not part of Upward Basketball **because they take away the opportunity for improvement for all players and contradict the spirit of the rules. This prevents defenders from sagging or crowding an area of the court to gain a defensive advantage.**)
3. Double-teaming is not allowed. However, help defense is strongly encouraged in the following instances:
  - › **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. It also causes the defense to be aware of and be able to defend screen situations.**



Here is an example of how help defense involving picks and screens can occur:

- An offensive player (O1) sets a legal screen on a defender (D1), allowing the ball handler (O2) to freely drive into the lane. As O2 gets into the lane a nearby defender (D2) slides over away from his assigned man to guard O2 until D1 can recover from the screen. Upon recovery, D2 must return to guarding his assigned opponent.
- › **Fast Breaks:** During any fast break (when the team that gains possession of the ball pushes it quickly into the opponent's end of the court, hoping to get a good shot off before the other team has a chance to set up on defense), another defensive player not assigned to the ball handler may help in order to slow or stop the fast break. 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 and not be able to help.** Here is an example of how fast break help defense can occur:

- The defense gets a rebound under the goal and throws a wide open overhead pass to a teammate located along half court. This player receives the pass and is advancing the fast break. Meanwhile, the only opposing player close to him is not his assigned defender. This person quickly guards the ball carrier and stops the fast break.





### Section Three: Rules Unique to Upward Basketball

› **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, this rule provides the defense more opportunity to properly defend this area without abandoning their assigned offensive opponent.**

- For instance, the ball handler beats his man and drives into the lane. After doing this, he meets a second defender who is in the lane. As long as this defender is within arm's reach of his assigned opponent, he is allowed to provide help until the ball handler's assigned opponent can recover. Upon recovery, the defensive player that provided help must then return to guarding only his assigned player.
4. At the beginning of each six-minute segment, both coaches should line up the players at mid-court and match them up by ability without giving verbal cues. This act is performed to promote equal player matchups. **Equal match-ups combined with man-to-man defense create five competitive pairings on the court.** If both coaches and referees foresee a match-up problem due to position and height, players can be shuffled around to create a better game situation.
  5. Full-court presses are not allowed. Defensive players may not guard their opponents in the backcourt. **This will allow for more play to occur in the front court and creates an equal opportunity for each child to participate both on offense and defense.**



6. Due to the shortness of the court in cross-court play, backcourt violations will not be called. However, if playing on a regulation-size court (84 feet), backcourt violations should be called.
7. 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.**
8. Referees will call and explain all violations. The detail of explanations will vary according to the age group and understanding of the players and should decrease as the season progresses. **This is done because referees serve as "on-the-floor coaches" teaching players what is and is not acceptable on the court.**
9. When possible, referees will advise players of potential violations before the violation occurs. **Through words of encouragement and warning, referees are often able to prevent a violation from occurring.**
10. No technical fouls or protest of games. **Technical fouls and protests go against the spirit of Upward Basketball. Coaches and referees should instead follow the example in the Circle of Affirmation.**
11. No score will be given for a basket in the wrong goal. It will be treated as a turnover. **This will prevent further embarrassing a player for making this mistake.**





### Section Three: Rules Unique to Upward Basketball

12. A player committing two fouls in one six-minute segment must sit out the remainder of that segment. The next player in the rotation comes in as the substitute. This does not change the normal rotation, because the fouled-out player does not come back into the game until scheduled to do so. The player who comes in as a substitute gains extra playing time. This extra time does not affect the predetermined substitution system. **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.** *Note: In a second foul situation, when a team only has five players at a game, replace the substitution rule with a two-point penalty by awarding the fouled team two additional points. The opposing team then takes possession.*
13. Non-shooting fouls result in the ball being taken out on the side by the offended team (no bonus rule). All shooting fouls result in free throws. **By not administering bonus situation free throws, this allows all players on the court to contribute to consistent game action.**
14. The three second restriction should not be called in the K5 or first- and second-grade divisions. However, coaches and referees should encourage offensive movement in and out of the lane area. **This helps teach the younger age groups to avoid this potential violation without being penalized.**