



Basketball Safety Guidelines

Basketball programs have risks that place participants in physical harm. The ankle and knee are the most common sites of injury to basketball players, followed by the lower back, hand, and wrist. Eye injuries also occur frequently, as a result of being hit with fingers or elbows.¹ The following guidelines should be followed when participating in the sport of basketball.

Facility & Equipment

- Court dimensions need to meet WIAA regulations for play/safety. Create a buffer zone around the court.
- Check padding on walls behind backboards.
- Pad scoring tables and edges of water fountains near field of play. Have extra padding available to pad potential hazards.
- During non-league games use the "no-dunk" rule. Glass backboards and rims can be broken if too much stress is placed on them and the change in momentum can cause players to lose balance and fall.
- Provide necessary courtside equipment: mat for cleaning footwear, extra towels, ball racks, mops, first aid kit.
- Dry body sweat on floor immediately. Check the floor for slip hazards and wipeup as needed.
- Place team bench as far back as possible from sidelines.
- Check bleachers, including locking system.

Supervision & Instruction

- Make sure athletes wear all the required safety gear every time he or she plays and practices.
- Don't tolerate horseplay or unsportsman like conduct. Avoid purposeful pushing and tripping.
- Teach players to pay attention to the game at all times.
- Insure students wear shoes appropriate for the playing surface. Running shoes should not be worn as the soles are not designed for quick turning, stopping and jumping.
- Taped ankles or ankle supports with high-top tennis shoes will reduce the severity of ankle injuries.
- Instruct athletes to use their legs like springs when rebounding to absorb shock and be alert to other players' positions so you can land safely.
- Players should wear pads to protect the knees and elbows from bruises and floor burns. Additionally, a knee brace can be useful, if there is a history of knee injuries.
- Promote the use of mouth guards. This device will not only protect teeth from being chipped or knocked out but will protect their tongue as well.
- Insure athletes do not wear chains, rings, and metal wristbands. If they wear glasses, they should be secured and have shatterproof lenses.
- Use a whistle.
- Make sure all players warm up and cool down.
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¹ <http://www.safeusa.org/sports/basket.htm>