**Note: The WNBA now plays under** [***FIBA Rules***](http://www.fiba.basketball/OBR2017/Final.pdf) **with the following exceptions.**

# **Court Dimensions:**

1. Court Length = 94' x 50' (28.65m x 15.24m).
2. Size of Lane = 19’ x 16’ 8" (5.7912m x 5.08m).
3. Rim Height = 10’ (3.05m).
4. **Three-Point arc Dimensions:**
   1. *Arc Radius/FG Distance from the basket:*
      1. Top of the arc = 22’ 2”.
      2. In the corner = 21’ 8”.
      3. Minimum distance from sidelines = 4’ 1”.

# **Ball Dimensions (FIBA Rules):**

1. Circumference = 74.9-78 cm (29.5-30.7").

# **Timing Rules:**

1. Duration of the game is 4 10-minute quarters.
2. **Overtime periods are 5 minutes in duration:**
   1. There are no overtime periods during the preseason & the Summer League.
   2. There is a max of 2 overtime periods per game during the regular-season.
   3. There are no limits for overtime periods during the postseason.
3. The length of halftime is 15 minutes.
4. Rest Time Between 1st / 2nd and 3rd / 4th Periods**=**2 minutes.
5. **The shot clock is 24 seconds:**
6. When play resumes with less than full amount on shot clock (e.g., defense taps ball out-of-bounds), shot clock does not start until team establishes control inbounds.
7. The shot clock is not reset on a double foul or an alternating possession situation when the same team retains possession.
8. After an offensive rebound, the shot clock reverts to 14 seconds
9. The shot clock resets when the shot is released or the FG attempt hits rim.
10. The shot clock is reset after most fouls (personal or technical).
11. *The shot clock will reset to 14 seconds (instead of 24) after any of the following occur:*
    1. an offensive rebound of an unsuccessful field goal or free throw attempt which contacted the basket ring.
    2. a loose ball foul is called on the defensive team in the sequence immediately following an unsuccessful field goal or free throw attempt which contacted the basket ring.
    3. the offensive team gains possession after the ball goes out of bounds in the sequence immediately following an unsuccessful field goal or free throw attempt which contacted the basket ring.
12. The back violation occurs after 8 seconds; Count is not reset if ball is deflected out of bounds by defense or if possession is retained because of an alternating possession throw-in.
13. The game clock stops after a successful FG during the last 2 minutes of the 4th period and any overtime period.
14. When play resumes with less than full amount on shot clock (e.g., defense taps ball out-of-bounds), shot clock does not start until team establishes control inbounds.

# **Gameplay Rules:​**

1. **Players are limited to 5 fouls (any combination of personal and technical):**
   1. All fouls involving contact, even when play is stopped, are personal fouls.
2. **Bonus Free Throws:**
   1. *a team is "in the bonus" after either of the following occurs:*
      1. 4th team foul per quarter (2 FTs).
      2. 2nd team foul in the last 2 minutes of the quarter.
   2. Team fouls include all personal fouls and player (not coach) technical fouls.
   3. Extra periods are extensions of the 4th quarter.
3. **Technical Foul** = 1 free throw and possession of the ball at center.
4. **Jump Ball = Yes:**
   1. On all held ball/jump ball situations during the game, play resumes with a (tossed) jump ball.
   2. If the offense retains possession after a jump ball, the clock is reset to 14 seconds or remains the same if there were more than 24 seconds on the clock.
5. **Legal Alley-Oop** = Yes.
6. **Touch Ball On/Above Cylinder = Yes (Once the ball touches the rim or backboard, it's fair game):**
   1. Any player(s) can reach up and swat it away or tip it in.
   2. All players are prohibited from touching the ball on its downward flight toward the basket before it hits the rim if it still has a chance to enter the basket.
   3. Reaching through the basket to play the ball is also a violation.
7. **Closely Guarded For 5 Seconds**= Yes (While holding or dribbling the ball within 3' (1m) anywhere on the court; not a combination of both).
8. **Number of Referees** = Three (3).
9. **3-Point Shot (Status Change):**
   1. Once a 3-point shot has been released, if the ball is touched by any player in the 2-point area, the status of the shot changes to a 2-point shot.
   2. Note: If a shooter is fouled in the act of shooting for a 3-point goal and the shot is not successful, 3 free throws will be awarded; the status of the shot does not change the status of the shooter.
10. **Injured Player:**
    1. A 20-second timeout is automatically called and no team is charged with a time-out;
    2. Referee stops play at an appropriate time to deal with injury.
    3. If an injured player is entitled to free throws and must leave the game, the substitute shall attempt the throws.
11. **Rebounding Own Shot Allowed** = Yes (provided that the refs judge that it was a shot at goal).
12. **Ball over Backboard**:
    1. The ball is still in play if it passes over the backboard in either direction, provided it does not hit a basket support.
13. **Goaltending/basket interference:**
    1. No blocking a ball in downward flight towards the rim.
    2. Once the ball strikes the rim, any player can play the ball (i.e. swat it away or tap it in).
14. All types of zone defenses are allowed, just like in NCAA and high school basketball without the 3-second restriction in the key.
15. Once a player touches the frontcourt, that player has frontcourt status; the same applies to the backcourt. It is possible for a player to have dual status as that player progresses from the backcourt to the frontcourt, so once the player touches the frontcourt as a ball holder/dribbler, the player must continue to proceed to the frontcourt.
16. **Procedures to Initiate a Challenge:**
    1. *To initiate a challenge, the head coach must call a legal timeout in a timely manner:*
       1. For a timeout to be considered “timely”, the challenging coach must call the timeout prior to live play resuming including, for example, prior to a referee handing the ball to the thrower-in, a referee handing the ball to a free throw shooter, or a referee tossing a jump ball.
       2. Once these windows of opportunity have closed, any subsequent timeout no longer will be considered timely for purposes of triggering a challenge; and, as a result, a team is no longer permitted to challenge a previous event.
    2. *Immediately after calling a timeout to initiate a challenge:*
       1. The coach shall press a button that will illuminate a blinking light positioned at the end of the scorer’s table closest to the challenging team’s bench; and
       2. After the referee approaches the head coach following the stoppage in play, the coach shall explain to the referee the specific event that he/she would like to challenge.
       3. If a team calls a timeout to challenge an event that may not be challenged, it will retain its challenge but will be charged with the timeout.
       4. If a team calls a timeout to challenge an event but does not have any timeouts remaining, it will be charged an excessive timeout, resulting in a technical foul, and no challenge review will take place.
    3. *Standard of Review:*
       1. The Replay Center will help facilitate the review, but the on-court referees will make the final determination on all reviews.
       2. For each reviewable matter (regardless of whether it is triggered by a head coach or referee), the current reviewable matters as set forth by NBA rules will apply.
       3. To overturn the call on the floor via a challenge, the visual evidence available on replay must be clear and conclusive. If the video is inconclusive, the challenge will be deemed unsuccessful.
       4. If the replay equipment is not functional or the challenged event is not captured on video, the call on the floor will stand and the challenging team will retain its challenge and timeout.

# **Free Throw Rules:**

1. The number of players permitted on free throw lane is 5 (3 opponents of shooter, 2 teammates).
2. Rebound places, if left vacant, cannot be used by opponents.
3. Players in rebound places may leave on release of the free throw; others must remain behind the free throw line extended and behind the 3-point line until the ball strikes the ring.
4. A violation by the free throw shooter overrides all other violations; if the free throw is successful and the shooter does not violate, all other violations are ignored and the free throw counts.
5. All players have 5 seconds to attempt the free throw.

# **Timeout & Challenge Rules:**

1. **Each team gets 2 time-outs in first half, 3 in second half, and 1 per extra period:**
   1. One 60-second in each of the 1st three periods, two 60-second in 4th period.
   2. All time-outs are 60 seconds in duration, & they do not accumulate.
2. All timeouts can only be called by the head coach at the scorer’s table during dead-ball situations.
3. The time-out will be granted on next play stoppage or, if requested in time, after the next field goal scored against the team that requested the time-out.
4. No time-outs are allowed once a set of free throws has started (ball at disposal of free thrower for first or only free throw).
5. **All WNBA teams have 2 official challenges per game:**
   1. If the coach's challenge is successful -- that is, the ruling on the court is overturned -- then his team isn't charged with a timeout. However, if the second challenge is successful, the team retains its timeout but no longer has a challenge.
   2. If it's unsuccessful, it costs the team a timeout. A coach can't challenge any ruling if he doesn't have at least one timeout remaining.
   3. An unused challenge carries over from regulation to overtime and from one overtime period to the next overtime period, but a team out of challenges at the end of regulation does not gain a new or additional challenge.
   4. *Within these time constraints, a team’s head coach may challenge the following select NBA replay triggers:*
      1. Not reasonably certain whether a successful field goal was released or a called foul was committed prior to the expiration of the 24-second shot clock.
      2. Not reasonably certain as to which team should be awarded possession after a ball goes out-of-bounds or whether an out-of-bounds in fact occurred.
      3. Not reasonably certain whether a called common foul or called clear path foul met the criteria of a clear-path-to-the-basket foul.
      4. Not reasonably certain as to which player should attempt free throws on a called foul.
      5. Not reasonably certain as to whether the defender was inside or outside the restricted area (after the referees called a block or charge foul in the vicinity of the restricted area).
      6. Not reasonably certain whether a goaltending or basket interference violation was called correctly.
      7. *Not reasonably certain whether an off-ball foul occurred prior to any of the following:*
         1. an offensive player beginning his shooting motion on a successful field goal if the off-ball foul is committed by a defensive player.
         2. a defensive foul committed prior to the ball being released on a throw-in.
         3. the ball being released on a successful field goal or a double-foul if the off-ball foul is committed by an offensive player.
      8. Not reasonably certain whether a team had an improper number of players on the court while the ball is in play.
   5. *Referees will possess the sole and exclusive ability to initiate the following replay triggers at any point during the game:*
      1. Player altercation.
      2. Not reasonably certain whether a called foul met the criteria of a flagrant foul.
      3. A field goal is made with no time remaining on the clock at the end of any period.
      4. A foul is called with no time remaining on the clock at the end of any period.
      5. A play concludes (i) with no time remaining on the clock (0:00) at the end of any period or (ii) at a point when the referees believe that actual time may have expired in any period; and the referees are reasonably certain that the game clock malfunctioned during the play.
   6. *Referees will possess the sole and exclusive ability to initiate the following replay triggers during the final two minutes of the fourth period and at any point during overtime:*
      1. Not reasonably certain whether a successful field goal was scored correctly as a 2-point or 3-point field goal, or in the case of a called shooting foul, whether the player was attempting a 2-point or 3-point field goal; and
      2. Not reasonably certain whether the ball touched the rim and thus whether the shot clock should be adjusted.
6. **Procedures to Initiate a Challenge:**
   1. *To initiate a challenge, the head coach must call a legal timeout in a timely manner:*
      1. For a timeout to be considered “timely”, the challenging coach must call the timeout prior to live play resuming including, for example, prior to a referee handing the ball to the thrower-in, a referee handing the ball to a free throw shooter, or a referee tossing a jump ball.
      2. Once these windows of opportunity have closed, any subsequent timeout no longer will be considered timely for purposes of triggering a challenge; and, as a result, a team is no longer permitted to challenge a previous event.
   2. *Immediately after calling a timeout to initiate a challenge:*
      1. The coach shall press a button that will illuminate a blinking light positioned at the end of the scorer’s table closest to the challenging team’s bench; and
      2. After the referee approaches the head coach following the stoppage in play, the coach shall explain to the referee the specific event that he/she would like to challenge.
      3. If a team calls a timeout to challenge an event that may not be challenged, it will retain its challenge but will be charged with the timeout.
      4. If a team calls a timeout to challenge an event but does not have any timeouts remaining, it will be charged an excessive timeout, resulting in a technical foul, and no challenge review will take place.
   3. *Standard of Review:*
      1. The Replay Center will help facilitate the review, but the on-court referees will make the final determination on all reviews.
      2. For each reviewable matter (regardless of whether it is triggered by a head coach or referee), the current reviewable matters as set forth by WNBA rules will apply.
      3. To overturn the call on the floor via a challenge, the visual evidence available on replay must be clear and conclusive. If the video is inconclusive, the challenge will be deemed unsuccessful.
      4. If the replay equipment is not functional or the challenged event is not captured on video, the call on the floor will stand and the challenging team will retain its challenge and timeout.
7. **All WNBA teams have 2 official challenges per game:**
   1. If the coach's challenge is successful -- that is, the ruling on the court is overturned -- then his team isn't charged with a timeout.
   2. If it's unsuccessful, it costs the team a timeout. A coach can't challenge any ruling if he doesn't have at least one timeout remaining.

**​Substitution Rules:**

1. A "substitution opportunity" begins when the clock is stopped and the ball is dead (i.e. after a whistle or after a field goal in the last two minutes). It ends when the ball is placed at the disposal of a player making a throw-in, or placed at the disposal of a free throw shooter for the first or only free throw. One major effect of this is to prevent substitutions during free throws.
2. Either team may sub on any foul, violation, alternating possession situation or time-out.
3. **A sub for the free throw shooter must report before the free throw activity begins, and the opponents may send one matching sub provided the sub reports before the ball is at the disposal of the free throw shooter for the last free throw:**
   1. These players may enter only if the last free throw is successful.
4. **After a basket in the last 2 minutes of play, the team scored upon may initiate a substitution provided the substitute(s) request is communicated to the officials (through the scorer) before the ball becomes live after the scoring of the basket:**
   1. If the team scored upon makes a substitution, the opponents may do so also.
5. Referee’s stoppages are included as substitution opportunities.

# **Season Structure:**

1. **Uniform Rules:**
   1. *Both teams must wear their dark color uniforms during games (similar to this* [*NAL Championship Game*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5gMMdVxPCN4&feature=youtu.be)*) unless either of the following occurs (i.e. mandatory “Color Rush”):*
      1. The teams share similar colors.
      2. If someone is colorblind (i.e. teams with red or green uniforms will not participate).
      3. WNBA Example: Indiana Fever vs Connecticut Sun.
   2. *If that is the case, the designated home team will wear their dark color uniforms and the away team will wear either of the following:*
      1. Their lighter color uniforms.
      2. An alternative darker color uniform.
2. **Each team will receive premier points for entry into the postseason:**
   1. 3 points for winning a game.
   2. 2 points for winning a game in overtime.
   3. 1.5 points for drawing a game.
   4. 0 points for losing a game.
   5. 1 bonus point for losing by 10 points (or fewer) or in overtime.
   6. .5 bonus point for scoring at least 100 points.
3. **At the end of the regular-season, the team with the best regular-season record (i.e. highest point total) is awarded the Supporter’s Shield:**
   1. For those who don't know, it echoes the practice of the top European soccer leagues in which the team with the best regular-season record is the champion, similar to the Supporter’s Shield in MLS.
   2. The WNBA Supporter’s Shield winners are guaranteed home-court advantage in all rounds of the playoffs they compete in, including the WNBA championships.
   3. However, the awards can just be a certificate in a frame.
   4. *Tiebreaker criteria when competitors are level on points:*
      1. The team that won the head-to-head match (if applicable) is ranked first.
      2. If this game was a draw, then the team with the more wins is ranked first.
      3. Point difference (PD) = is the number of points scored in all league matches minus the number of points conceded.
      4. Points for (PF) = is the total number of points scored by a team over the course of the regular-season.
      5. Points against (PA) = is the number of goals scored against them by their opponents over the course of the regular-season.
      6. Fewest disciplinary actions.
      7. Strength of schedule = two-third (66 2/3%) for the opponent's record and one-third (33 1/3%) for the opponents' opponents record.
      8. Total number of points scored on the road.
      9. Road point difference.
      10. Total number of points scored @ home.
      11. Home point difference.
      12. If still identical, a play-off is required.
      13. Coin toss (2 teams) or drawing of lots (at least 3 teams).
4. **The 4-game (2h/2a) preseason is an international exhibition series (similar to the NBA Global Games) that starts in the first week of April and ends in mid-April:**
   1. *Teams will be allowed to choose which team that they would like to play from the following leagues:*
      1. EuroLeague Women.
      2. Women’s Chinese Basketball Association (WCBA).
      3. FIBA Africa Women's Clubs Champions Cup.
      4. Teams will have with one long European/African/Asian tour (for American franchises) and one long American tour (for European/African/Asian franchises) in an alternating cycle.
   2. All WNBA players must play in at least 2 games during the preseason/international exhibition games before the start of the regular season.
   3. There must be a 2-day break in between games during each tour, a 3-day break in-between tours, and another 3-day break between the end of the preseason & start of the regular-season.
   4. *Every year when the FIBA AmeriCup or FIBA Basketball World Cup are not held, the national teams will hold a series of 4 exhibition games (2 of which must be in their home country) around the world during August & September:*
      1. All of the national teams can play in any basketball arena with a total seating capacity of at least *10,000* seating capacity.
      2. All of the national team players will complete fall training with their national team.
      3. All of the national team players must be paid during the preseason while they are playing with their national team.
   5. All preseason tickets (including national team exhibitions) must not cost more than 2017 US$35 (must be adjusted for inflation).
5. **The regular-season is a 40-43 game (20-22h/20-22a/1n; including the in-season tournament) season that starts in early May and ends in early September:**
   1. *The Main Regular Season (34-games; 17h/17a):*
      1. Each team plays 4 games (2h/2a) against all of the other 8 teams in their division. (32 Games).
      2. Each team plays 2 games (1h/1a) against 1 team from each of the other 3 divisions based on the final division standings from the prior season (i.e. East #1 plays West #1, etc.) (2 Games).
      3. During years in which the Summer Olympics are held, the WNBA takes a month off in the middle of the season to allow players to practice and compete with their respective national teams.
   2. *The* *WNBA Commissioners Cup / In-Season Tournament (6-9 games):*
      1. The NBA Cup / In-Season Tournament is a knockout cup/tournament that occurs during the regular season, similar to the NBA Cup & the US Open Cup in Soccer.
      2. *All 18 teams will be drawn into 3 groups of 3 within their conference based on the amount of bonus points from the previous regular season:*
         1. Bracket #1 = Teams #1-3
         2. Bracket #2 = Teams #4-6
         3. Bracket #3 = Teams #7-9
      3. Beginning in early June and continuing through late June, each team will play 6 designated Group Play games on “Tournament Nights” – three games against each opponent in its group, with 3 games at home and 3 on the road.
      4. *The knockout stage will be a 6-team single-elimination bracket in July with the championship being in either of the following late July:*
         1. A neutral-site indoor arena with at least *10,000* seating capacity used for either basketball and/or ice hockey (can be NBA, NHL, College, or none of the above)
         2. An indoor NFL / American football stadium (similar to the NCAA Final Four).
      5. *The winner of the WNBA Commissioners Cup / In-Season Tournament will win the following:*
         1. A 2023 $30,000 bonus for each player; this must be adjusted at least once every 3 years.
         2. 9 additional bonus points
         3. An automatic playoff bid alongside the WNBA Supporter’s Shield winners (assuming that a team doesn't win both) regardless of conference.
      6. All games in the tournament (except for the final) will count towards the regular season (and bonus point total).
6. **Playoffs - the post-season is an 8-team Best-of-Series tournament:**
   1. There must be a 3-day break in-between the end of the regular-season and the start of the postseason.
   2. *The 8 teams that enter the tournament are the top 4 teams from each conference:*
      1. The top 4 teams in each conference are ranked in order by their amount of premier points, & teams are never "reseeded".
   3. *The Playoff Format:*
      1. The 1st Round (Conference Semifinals) = 2v3 for each division (#1 seed gets bye).
      2. The 2nd Round (Conference Finals) = 1/4 vs 2/3 for each conference
      3. The 3rd Round (WNBA Championship) = 1/2/3/4 vs 1/2/3/4 from each conference.
      4. All rounds are a best 2-of-3 series in a 1-1-1 format.
7. **Order of Season (# of Games):**
   1. WNBA preseason / international crossover (4).
   2. WNBA Regular Season (40-43).
   3. WNBA Postseason (6-9).
   4. Total Games = 44-52.

# **Roster & Salary:**

1. All WNBA teams must have 15 players, and all players are considered active.
2. **The Salary Caps:**
   1. All WNBA teams can no longer give guaranteed player contracts.
   2. *All WNBA teams have a hard salary cap of $25 million per season similar to the NFL for all 15 players on the roster:*
      1. The minimum salary for all players drafted from college and/or international leagues is $51,000 per season.
      2. The minimum salary for all players drafted straight from high school is $25,500 per season.
   3. *A hard salary cap means that all contracts which cause a team to violate a hard cap are subject to major sanctions, including any of the following while breaching salary cap rules:*
      1. 1st offense = reduction of $1 million in their salary cap for the next season.
      2. 2nd offense = reduction of another $2 million in their salary cap for the next season in addition to the previous reduction.
      3. 3rd offense = reduction of another $ $3 million in their salary cap for the next season in addition to the previous reductions & the voiding of violating contracts.
      4. 4th offense = reduction of another $4 million in their salary cap for the next season in addition to the previous reductions, the voiding of violating contracts, & the stripping of championships won.
   4. *Signing bonuses for drafted players is guaranteed money that's given regardless of whether the player stays or not (i.e. gets cut):*
      1. Example Contract = a basketball player right out of college signs a deal worth $1 million over 4 years, plus a $50,000 million signing bonus. To minimize the impact on the salary cap, the team spreads the bonus over the life of the contract, in this case, $12,500 each year.
      2. However, all of the bonus money that was being prorated throughout the length of the contract still has to be paid if the player quits, is released, traded or waived.

**﻿WNBA Draft Structure:**

1. **The WNBA Draft takes place in the last Thursday of March and lasts for two (2) rounds:**
   1. All potential players must be at least 18 years old and have a high school diploma or GED in order to be eligible to play in the WNBA.
   2. All college players who declare for the draft and are not drafted remain eligible for college basketball unless & until they sign a professional contract.
2. **Order of 1st Round Draft Picks:** 
   * 1. The selection order for the first round is based on each team's amount of bonus points in the previous season & whether the team reached the playoffs.
     2. Teams that did not reach the playoffs the previous season are ranked in reverse order of their records (so the team with the fewest wins is awarded the first selection).
     3. Ties between teams with identical records are determined by the following tiebreakers (in order): strength of schedule and a pre-draft coin flip.
     4. Non-playoff teams (1-12)
     5. Eliminated in the Conference Semifinals (13-14)
     6. Eliminated in the Conference Finals (15-16)
     7. WNBA Runner-up (17)
     8. WNBA Champion (18)
3. **The selection order for the 2nd round is based on a lottery selection:**
   1. 18 ping-pong balls numbered 1 through 18 will be placed in a lottery machine.
   2. All 18 balls are placed in the lottery machine and they are mixed for 20 seconds; then the first ball is removed.
   3. The process repeats until all teams have been assigned a pick.
4. All draft picks can be traded.