

SHAKOPEE**HOOOPS**

BASKETBALL

Skill Standards

by grade

www.ShakopeeHoops.net



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Basketball Skill Development Standards (Grades 1–8)

*These grade-level standards reflect what players should be able to demonstrate by the **end of the season**. Designed to support coaches, parents, and players, these benchmarks provide a clear view of what development looks like across the program.*

Age Range Philosophies

These developmental stages help guide our approach to skill building, coaching focus, and player expectations at each grade level.

Grade Range	Developmental Focus	Competitive Philosophy
Grades 1–3	Exploration, motor skill development, comfort with the ball	Focus on fun, participation, and learning the game. Winning is not emphasized, skills and fun are.
Grades 4–5	Foundation building, applying skills in live game play	Begin learning how to compete with effort and pride. Winning is introduced but not prioritized.
Grades 6–7	Game understanding, team concepts, consistency	Players compete to win within team structure. Learning to prepare, execute, and adjust.
Grade 8	High school readiness, leadership, full-skill integration	Competing to win becomes an expectation. Execution, composure, and accountability matter.

Standards were created and in alignment with USA Basketball & Jr. NBA



Status: final review

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What We Mean by “Winning”

In the context of this document, **winning** goes **beyond the scoreboard**.

At the younger levels, **winning** means:

- Developing skills with effort and focus
- Showing sportsmanship and respect for teammates, coaches, opponents, and officials
- Learning to compete with enthusiasm, resilience, and a team-first mindset

As players progress, **winning** expands to include:

- Applying skills and concepts in game situations
- Making smart decisions that help the team succeed
- Contributing in ways that don’t always show up in the box score — like **hustle plays, communication, and leadership**

Ultimately, **WINNING** is defined as: a consistent commitment to personal growth, team success, and playing the game the right way.

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1st Grade

Focus: Comfort with the ball, basic movement, and enjoyment.

- **Dribbling**
 - Maintain a continuous dribble with dominant hand while stationary and moving in a straight line (walking, jogging, running)
 - Begin exploring non-dominant hand control while stationary
 - **Passing**
 - Learn and practice basic chest and bounce passes to a partner
 - Understand how to step toward the target when passing
 - **Catching emphasis:** use two hands, soft hands, eyes on the ball
 - **Shooting**
 - Use proper hand placement and a balanced stance
 - Attempt close-range shots on lowered hoops using smaller basketballs
 - **Footwork**
 - Perform controlled jump stops while moving
 - Begin learning the difference between pivoting and traveling
 - **Defense**
 - Hold basic defensive stance with knees bent and hands up
 - Practice sliding feet to stay in front of a partner
 - **Mindset & Game Approach**
 - Focus on fun, learning, and participation
 - Begin understanding teamwork and encouragement
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2nd Grade

Focus: Foundational coordination and application.

- **Dribbling**
 - Dribble confidently with either hand while stationary and moving in a straight line
 - Begin practicing direction changes using a crossover or pivot
 - **Passing**
 - Deliver chest, bounce, and overhead passes to a moving partner
 - Begin using simple pass fakes to improve timing
 - **Shooting**
 - Demonstrate basic form when shooting from close range
 - Layups with dominant hand from both sides of the basket
 - **Footwork**
 - Show understanding of triple-threat stance
 - Pivot out of the triple-threat to pass or shoot
 - **Defense**
 - Move laterally while maintaining stance
 - Begin understanding how to stay between the ball and the basket
 - **Offense**
 - Understands spacing and is aware of where teammates are on the floor
 - **Rebounding**
 - Snatch the ball with 2 hands
 - Execute box out on free throw attempt
 - **Mindset & Game Approach**
 - Focus on effort, fun, and learning from mistakes
 - Begin showing positive body language and response to coaching
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3rd Grade

Focus: Fundamentals in game-like environments.

- **Dribbling**
 - Control dribble with either hand while changing speed and direction
 - Use simple moves (crossover, hesitation) to navigate space
 - Maintain position of the ball against light defensive pressure
 - **Passing**
 - Pass under light defensive pressure
 - Begin to lead teammates into space with bounce or chest passes
 - **Shooting**
 - Finish layups consistently with dominant hand
 - Be able to display and understand proper shooting mechanics
 - Develop mid-range form and when shooting
 - **Footwork**
 - Pivot and pass under light pressure
 - Complete layups with proper footwork (right hand layup, right knee up, etc.)
 - **Defense**
 - Show proper defensive stance when guarding the ball
 - Close out with control and high hands
 - Recognize when to help or stay with their own player
 - Use proper rebounding fundamentals (find, hit, get)
 - **Offense**
 - spacing concepts (Pass, Cut, Fill or Pass, Screen Away, etc.)
 - Execute basic movement off the ball (cuts to open space)
 - **Mindset & Game Approach**
 - Introduce 3v3 & 4v4 game like situations with emphasis on basic floor spacing
 - Play hard regardless of the score
 - Understand how effort leads to improvement
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4th Grade

Focus: Introduction of game IQ, spacing, and control.

- **Dribbling**
 - Dribble at full speed with both hands under control
 - Use change-of-direction moves (crossover, spin move) in game play
 - Shield the ball from defenders using proper body positioning
- **Passing**
 - Be able to pass while under individual pressure
 - Make leading passes to moving teammates
 - Execute V-cuts and L-cuts to get open for a pass
- **Shooting**
 - Use appropriate hand for layups on each side
 - Apply proper shooting mechanics in game-like situations
- **Footwork**
 - Pivot under pressure and maintain balance
 - Rip through in multiple directions to protect the ball
 - Finish around the rim off 1 foot and 2-foot jump stops
- **Defense**
 - Maintain proper defensive stance while pressuring the ball
 - Recognize and adjust to 1-pass-away and help-side positioning
 - Begin rotating to help on baseline or middle
 - Execute proper rebounding fundamentals consistently (find, hit, get)
- **Offense**
 - Demonstrate comfort in game settings with basic spacing and off-ball movement (e.g., pass-cut-fill, screen away)
 - Understand transition concepts and strategy: fill lanes on offense; sprint back, stop ball, and prevent layups on defense
 - Recognize what a “good” and “bad” shot is. Players take shots they can make at least 50% in practice situations
- **Mindset & Game Approach**
 - Begin learning how to compete with effort and pride
 - **Recognize team-first plays** like rebounding, passing to open teammates, good defense, or hustling for loose balls
 - Understand how to win and lose with respect
 - Recognize that preparation and teamwork impact outcomes

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5th Grade

Focus: Execution with consistency and expanding offensive/defensive awareness.

- **Dribbling**
 - Use change of direction moves to beat defenders in half-court and transition
 - Handle pressure while keeping head up and maintaining control
 - **Passing**
 - Utilize pass fakes to manipulate defenders
 - Begin using skip passes and post-entry feeds
 - **Shooting**
 - Consistent mid-range form under light defense
 - Practice daily form shooting and layups with both hands
 - **Footwork**
 - Use advanced pivots, jab steps, and rip-throughs to create space
 - Navigate using V-cuts, flare cuts, and curl cuts
 - **Defense**
 - Help and recover when teammates are beat
 - Close out with balance and hands up
 - Maintain vision of both ball and man
 - **Offense**
 - Understand timing and spacing in half-court offense
 - Use screening actions effectively (screen away, down screen, ball screen intro)
 - Read the defense to make appropriate cuts (backdoor, flare, curl)
 - Begin recognizing and adjusting based on defender positioning (overplay, help)
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 - **Mindset & Game Approach**
 - Compete with focus regardless of the score
 - Set personal effort goals in addition to team goals
 - Understand how practice and preparation lead to winning
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6th Grade

Focus: Increased pace, decision-making, and team concepts.

- **Dribbling**
 - Break pressure and initiate offense with confidence
 - React with correct move based on defender's position
 - Use cushion dribble (retreat under pressure without turning back) to escape traps
 - **Passing**
 - Execute passes within offensive sets and on the move
 - Make reads to anticipate teammate cuts and openings
 - **Shooting**
 - Hit pull-ups and catch-and-shoot shots under pressure
 - Use shot fakes to create scoring opportunities
 - Begin using finishing variety: reverse, inside hand, 1-foot and 2-foot finishes
 - Take shots they can make 50% or better in practice
 - **Footwork**
 - Move purposefully: screen, cut, and square to the basket
 - Apply jab steps, ball fakes, and rips from triple-threat position
 - Reestablish balance when recovering or transitioning
 - **Defense**
 - Communicate consistently on and off the ball
 - Communicate screens; switch or fight through with control
 - Rotate to help-side; box out consistently
 - Defensive positioning off-ball (midline, split the difference)
 - **Offense**
 - Operate in structured offensive sets or concepts (e.g., motion, 5-out)
 - Make reads in real time: pass, cut, drive decisions
 - Use ball screens with purpose (angle, timing)
 - Offensive communication begins (calling screens, directing traffic)
 - **Mindset & Game Approach**
 - Play to win while respecting the process and opponents
 - Use wins and losses to reflect, learn, and improve
 - Take responsibility for energy, focus, and effort
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7th Grade

Focus: Competitive consistency, spacing, and reacting to game flow.

- **Dribbling**
 - Handle traps and double teams with poise
 - Create scoring opportunities with advanced combo moves
 - Use retreat dribble into directional attack vs. pressure
- **Passing**
 - Make reads against defensive schemes (zone or man)
 - Deliver sharp, accurate passes under pressure
- **Shooting**
 - Extend range while maintaining proper mechanics
 - Shoot in rhythm off screens or movement
 - Emerging ability to make 3-point shots in game flow
 - Continue improving finishing moves: euro, pro hop, rondo
- **Footwork**
 - Prep feet before shots (1-2 or hop steps)
 - Use stride stops, pivots, and advanced footwork off the dribble, on rebounds, or in traffic
- **Rebounding**
 - Communicate assignments for free throw rebounding
 - Maintain vision of both ball and man
- **Defense**
 - Execute team defensive concepts without reminders
 - Communicate clearly during switches, help, or traps
 - Rotate to help on drives; anticipate and recover
 - Understand and apply “1 pass away” and “2 passes away” principles
- **Offense**
 - Identify and exploit mismatches (post-ups, isolations, closeout attacks)
 - Adapt actions based on defensive looks (e.g., zone vs. man principles)
 - Maintain spacing and timing with increased pace
 - Increase ability to flow from transition into half-court offense
- **Mindset & Game Approach**
 - Compete with confidence and discipline
 - Understand how to prepare mentally and physically for games
 - Support teammates and lead by example

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8th Grade

Focus: High school readiness and game command.

- **Dribbling**
 - Control tempo and create space at all speeds
 - Initiate and direct offensive sets as a ball handler
 - Recognize pressure and protect dribble with cushion or split dribbles
 - Identify and communicate offensive strategies based on opponent's defense
- **Passing**
 - Pass with timing, touch, and purpose
 - Recognize driving lanes and execute drive-and-kick reads
 - Make adjustments based on how opponents defend screens and actions
- **Shooting**
 - Shoot confidently from 3-point range with proper form
 - Score under pressure in late-clock or contested situations
 - Demonstrate multiple finishing options with both hands: euro, pro hop, inside hand, rondo, reverse
 - Maintain shot selection discipline; avoid low-percentage attempts
- **Footwork**
 - Master footwork for all phases: attack, shoot, defend
 - Move efficiently between offensive and defensive phases
 - Use stride stops and pivots to maintain control in traffic
- **Rebounding**
 - Execute "Find / Hit / Get" responsibilities with consistency
 - Communicate assignments for free throw rebounding
 - Maintain vision of both ball and man
- **Defense**
 - Defend multiple positions based on matchup needs
 - Anticipate passes, take charges, and disrupt timing
 - Communicate and adjust defensive strategies based on opponents
 - Run and adjust presses and press-breaks effectively
- **Offense**
 - Command offensive pace and spacing at game speed
 - Use deception (fakes, hesitations) to create advantages
 - Execute complex reads (drive & kick, skip passes, backdoor vs. deny)
 - Manage end-of-game and clock-based scenarios (special situations)

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8th Grade continued...

- **Mindset & Game Approach**
 - Play with purpose and consistency at a high level
 - Understand how to prepare mentally and physically for competition
 - Accept accountability for performance and leadership
 - Prepare to contribute in a high school program setting

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