

PSA Playing Time Rules – A Practical Guide
[Items in *Red Italics* have been copied from the PSA Rules]

The purpose of this document is to explain how to handle the following situation – You're playing a PSA basketball game, and the opposing coach is not playing their players according to the stated playing time rule.

General Rules - Mandatory Playing Time Requirements:

- 1. Coaches are responsible to ensure that all players meet their League specific mandatory playing time requirements.*
- 2. A coach who has a dispute over playing time must bring the infraction to the attention of the referee and opposing coach in time for it to be resolved during the game. If a team does not provide a scorekeeper or notify the referee and opposing coach of apparent violation, there is no basis for a protest.*

League Specific Playing Time Requirements

Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd Grade - Mandatory Playing Time Requirements:

- 1. Teams with ten (10) or less players: Each player must play at least one (1) full quarter from start to finish in each half.*
- 2. Teams with more than ten (10) players: Each player must play one (1) full quarter from start to finish in the game and no player may play in more than one (1) quarter in each half.*

3rd Grade through 12th Grade - Mandatory Playing Time Requirements:

- 1. Each player must play at least one (1) full quarter from start to finish and participate in both halves. **Select Divisions:** Each player must play at least one (1) full quarter from start to finish, but are not required to participate in both halves.*

For ALL Grades and Divisions:

- 2. These rules may be waived under the following circumstances.*
 - a) If a player arrives after the start of the game but before the start of the second half, the coach must play the player one (1) full quarter from start to finish in the second half and is not obligated to play the player in the first half.*
 - b) If a player arrives after the start of the second half, the coach is not obligated to play the player.*

First and foremost – keep calm. Remember that there are at least 15 to 20 players watching you and hearing what you say. Make sure that your facts are straight before you proceed.

Remember that the playing time rule was put in place for the **players** – not the coaches. Every child on every team deserves to play at least the minimum playing time, regardless of the score of the game or the player's talent/skill level.

The rule provides enough flexibility for the coach to leverage playing time by skill, or to sit a player for a quarter if they display an attitude problem. It does not mandate that every child play an equal amount of the game, nor does it exclude any one player from playing the entire game (except for K-2nd Grade teams with more than 10 players) – it simply sets a minimum standard for playing time per player.

Scorekeepers: Both teams must provide scorekeepers for every game. The first team listed on the schedule is the home team. The home team provides the official scorekeeper and keeps the official scorebook.

1. Scorekeepers are required to sit on either side of the timekeeper. Scorekeepers may not sit in the stands or on the team bench.
2. The scorekeeper must list all players in attendance from each team by full name and number.
3. Record individual scoring, personal fouls, team fouls, time-outs and player participation.
4. Scorekeepers must compare their scorebook at the end of each quarter to ensure no discrepancies.

It is the scorekeeper's responsibility to track playing time for their team and the opposing team and to inform their team's coach of a possible infraction. The scorekeeper should not approach the opposing coach on this topic.

Please note that you **MUST** bring the infraction to the attention of the referee and opposing coach in time for it to be resolved during the game. For example, with 1 minute left in the 1st half, your scorekeeper tells you that number 23 has not yet played. You cannot wait until the first half is over to tell the other coach that he/she has violated the playing time rule. Likewise, you have to tell the other coach **before** the 4th quarter begins that a player or more has not yet played one complete quarter from start to finish in the game. If, at halftime, you notice that more than 5 players have not yet played their required complete quarter (from start to finish), you must tell the coach **before** the 3rd quarter begins.

What to do:

Ask the referee for an official's timeout. Explain that your scorekeeper has indicated that number 23 has not yet played in the first half (or whatever the scenario is for your situation), putting the opposing team at risk to violate the playing time rule.

The referee does not enforce this rule but should act as a witness to the conversation and help to control the situation with both coaches to avoid any unpleasant incidents.

You and the referee should walk over to the opposing coach and you should repeat what you told the referee. Please be sure that you approach your opposing coach with the proper attitude and vocal tones – **do not be accusatory or rude**. The opposing coach should thank you and sub in the player for one on the court, according to the rules of the game.

If you are the opposing coach, do not react with anger to this situation – I'm sure it was an oversight on your part and not an intentional attempt to ignore the rule for any advantage potential. **Again, I will remind you that 15 – 20 players (and their parents) are watching how you behave.** Being rude or demeaning to a coach who is appropriately bringing a potential infraction to your attention is a violation of the PSA Coaches Code of Conduct, a portion of which is copied below:

8. AT NO TIME WILL A COACH ARGUE, ABUSE, THREATEN OR DEMEAN ANY CHILD, REFEREE, OTHER COACH, PARENT OR SPECTATOR.

9. Control egos and emotions; avoid displays of anger and frustration; don't retaliate.

Now, in the event that the opposing coach should refuse to honor your request, or if they disagree with your assessment of the playing time for their players – you should calmly tell the coach (with the referee still acting in a witness capacity) that, if they do not follow the playing time rules that you hold the right to protest the game, according to PSA policies and procedures.

At this point, the discussion should end between the coaches – hopefully, with a positive resolution. If the opposing coach does not correct the infraction and your team loses the game, you are within your rights to protest the game, referring to the PSA Rules document for information on how to do this.

If the opposing coach does not correct the infraction and your team wins the game, of course, you would not protest the game. In this case, please e-mail your League Coordinator giving the details of the situation so that the Basketball Board is aware of the situation and the need to discuss this situation with the coach(es) involved.

Please understand that EVERY coach on EVERY team in PSA is required to follow the playing time rules for their team in EVERY game. Just in case you missed it, I've copied the pertinent portion of the PSA Rules as a reminder:

“Violation of playing time rules is not tolerated. A coach who violates the playing time more than once will be brought to the attention of the Basketball Board for disciplinary action. Proof of the infraction could result in suspension or immediate replacement of the coach.”