

# BASKETBALL

With the US expected to dominate, basketball will be one of the most watched events of the Games

**W**hen Dr James Naismith dreamed up the game of basketball for students at a YMCA in Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1892 he could hardly have imagined its future. With a couple of peach baskets and a soccer ball, he created a sport that has evolved into a billion-dollar industry played in more than 200 countries around the world.

The Olympic history of basketball is just as colourful, having made its debut on a muddy outdoor court at the 1936 Berlin Games. The US won gold on that occasion and has dominated ever since, including during the '90s, with the superstar-packed Dream Teams. Women's basketball joined the Olympic fray in 1976.

## BALL

Official game balls have a leather covering.

**Diameter:** 24.8cm  
**Weight:** 650g

**Pressure:** Inflated to a pressure so that when dropped from a height of 1.8m, it will rebound to a height of 1.2m to 1.4m.



**UNIFORMS**  
Players wear singlets in the same colour, numbered from 4 to 15. Teams have a light and dark version of their uniform — if they are named first they wear light shirts as the "home" team.

## SHOES

With a history dating back to the early 1900s, basketball shoes can now be bought and then customised with special performance inserts.

## DRIBBLING

Players dribble, or bounce, the ball while moving about the court. A player can use either hand to dribble, but not both at the same time. Dribbling may continue for any length of time but may not resume once the ball comes to rest in the player's hand or hands. A player may not take more than two steps with the ball without dribbling.

## FREE THROW

A player fouled while shooting is awarded up to three free throws, depending on where he/she was shooting from at the time of the infringement. If a player makes a basket while being fouled, the basket counts and the player is also awarded one free throw.

## SHOT CLOCK

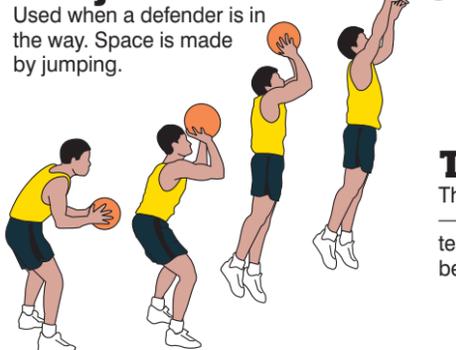
When a player gains control of the ball, his/her team must attempt a shot for goal within 24 seconds. If they fail to shoot, they lose possession.

## SCORING

Once they have the ball, a team has eight seconds to get it into the opposing half and 24 seconds to make an attempt on goal. Most baskets, or goals, count for two points, but a longer shot from behind the three-point line counts for three. One point is given for each free throw.

## THE JUMP-SHOT

Used when a defender is in the way. Space is made by jumping.



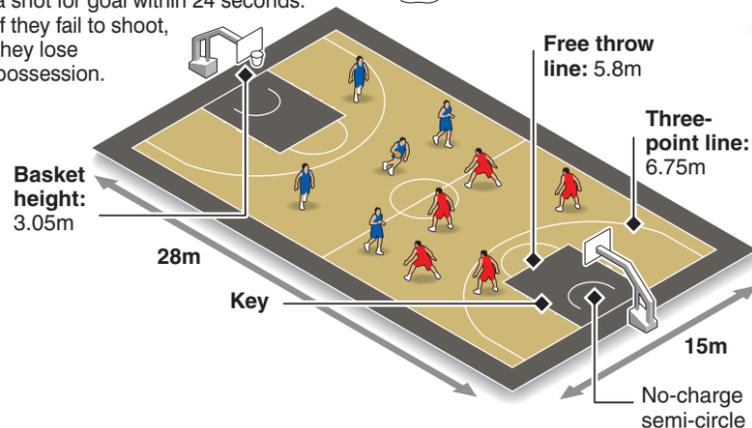
## THE LAY-UP

A frequently used scoring shot.



## THE ALLEY-OOP

The alley-oop is one of the most spectacular plays in basketball — the ball is lofted above the basket by one player for his/her teammate to slam dunk it. Rules state that an alley-oop can only be scored off a pass, not a shot.



- 1 Players rotate positions with one setting a screen for the other as a decoy move in an attempt to confuse the opposition.
- 2 Player comes out to provide a screen for the teammate identified as the potential scorer.

- 3 After faking a move towards the ball-carrier, the player doubles around the screen.
- 4 Ball-carrier lofts the ball above the basket.
- 5 Player slam dunks the ball for two points.

## AT THE GAMES

The Olympic tournament will involve 12 men's and 12 women's teams playing in separate competitions at Basketball Arena and North Greenwich Arena. Squads comprise 12 athletes — five players and seven substitutes. Games will be played in four 10 minute quarters. Five-minute over time periods will follow if a game is tied. Medal games will be played on August 11 (women) and August 12 (men).

## FORMAT

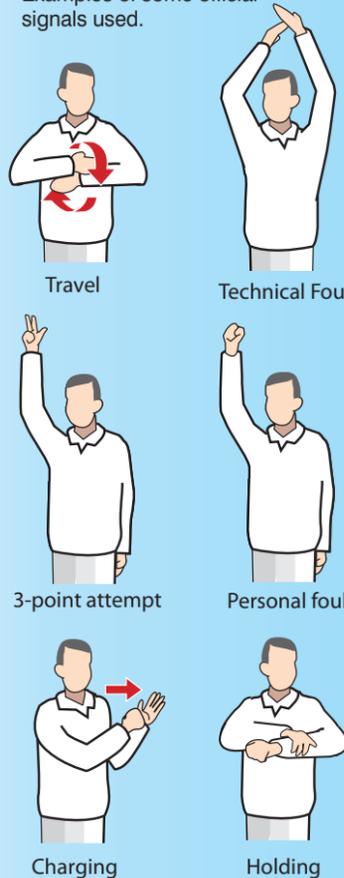
In both men's and women's competitions, teams will be grouped into two pools of six, with an even spread of top-seeded teams. Every team will play the other five in its group in a round-robin series, with the top four teams in each pool advancing to the knockout stage. The winning semi-finalists will meet to decide the gold and silver medals and the losing semi-finalists will play off for the bronze.

## HOW TO PLAY

Basketball is played by two teams of five players. Both teams try to score by putting the ball through the opponent's basket. At the same time, they try to prevent the other teams from securing the ball or scoring. The ball may be passed, thrown, tapped, rolled or dribbled in any direction, but it is a violation to run with the ball, kick it or strike it with the fist.

## REFEREE SIGNALS

Examples of some official signals used.



## FOULS

A foul can be awarded against a player who touches, bumps, shoves or barges into an opponent. Players with five fouls must leave the game. After a team commits four fouls in a quarter, the other team is awarded two free throws for any further foul in that period.



## FACT FILE

The Opals, our women's basketball team, made its Olympic debut in Los Angeles in 1984 and has since won three silver medals (2000, 2004 and 2008) — losing to the United States each time.