



NEHBL INVITATIONAL CUP 2026

Official Rulebook, Tournament Format & Policies

Northeast Herts Basketball League (NEHBL)

Version 1.0

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1. INTRODUCTION

The **NEHBL Invitational Cup** is organized to promote competitive, organized, and sportsmanlike basketball while fostering friendship among teams from different communities.

The tournament features **two (2) divisions**, each designed to promote basketball participation while serving different communities and levels of competition:

Open Division

A competitive division for invited teams from across the United Kingdom, allowing them to assemble their strongest rosters. Teams may recruit players from anywhere in the UK and are permitted to register **one (1) Non-Filipino Import Player**, making this division the highest level of competition within the NEHBL Invitational Cup.

35+ Division

A veteran division created to encourage participation among players aged **35 years and above**, while strengthening the local basketball community in Stevenage. Teams are primarily composed of Stevenage residents, promoting community pride, sportsmanship, and friendly competition.

The **NEHBL Invitational Cup** is committed to delivering a high-quality tournament that upholds the values of **integrity, fairness, respect, teamwork, and sportsmanship**. Unless otherwise stated in this handbook, all games shall be played in accordance with the latest **Official FIBA Basketball Rules**, with modifications adopted by the Tournament Committee where appropriate.

The Tournament Committee reserves the right to interpret, amend, or supplement these rules when necessary to ensure the smooth, fair, and professional operation of the competition.

2. TOURNAMENT OBJECTIVES

The **NEHBL Invitational Cup** aims to provide a professionally organized basketball tournament that promotes competitive excellence, community involvement, and the growth of basketball within Stevenage and across the United Kingdom.

The objectives of the NEHBL Invitational Cup are:

Promote Competitive Basketball

To provide a high-quality basketball competition where teams can showcase their skills, teamwork, and commitment while competing under a structured tournament format.

Develop Basketball Community

To strengthen the basketball community in Stevenage and build connections with teams and players from different areas across the United Kingdom.

Provide Two Levels of Competition

To create a balanced tournament environment through:

- **Open Division** — providing a competitive platform for teams and players from across the UK.
- **35+ Division** — promoting veteran basketball and encouraging participation from the Stevenage basketball community.

Encourage Fair Play and Sportsmanship

To maintain a respectful and professional environment where players, coaches, officials, and spectators uphold the values of:

- Respect
- Integrity
- Discipline
- Teamwork
- Sportsmanship

Promote Player Participation and Development

To provide meaningful playing opportunities for registered players through tournament rules that encourage team participation, player involvement, and competitive balance.

Ensure a Safe and Organized Tournament Experience

To deliver a well-managed tournament through:

- Clear rules and policies.
- Qualified officials.
- Proper game administration.
- Safety procedures and medical preparedness.

Recognize Excellence and Achievement

To celebrate outstanding performances by recognizing teams and individuals through awards that honor:

- Championship success.
- Individual achievements.
- Leadership.
- Sportsmanship.

Build a Long-Term Basketball Tradition

To establish the NEHBL Invitational Cup as a respected annual basketball event that brings together communities, develops relationships, and contributes to the continued growth of basketball in the region.

3. TOURNAMENT FORMAT

The **NEHBL Invitational Cup** consists of two (2) divisions:

- **Open Division**
- **35+ Division**

Each division shall consist of **four (4) participating teams**.

Unless otherwise determined by the Tournament Committee, **both divisions shall follow the same competition format, rules, and policies.**

ELIMINATION ROUND

Each division shall play a **Single Round Robin** format.

- Each team shall play **one (1) game against every other team** in its division.
 - With four (4) teams in each division, every team shall play a total of **three (3) elimination games.**
 - At the conclusion of the elimination round, teams shall be ranked according to the **NEHBL Tournament Point System.**
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TOURNAMENT POINT SYSTEM

The standings in each division shall be determined using the following Tournament Point System:

Result

Win

Loss

Forfeit

The team standings at the end of the elimination round shall be based on the **total tournament points accumulated** by each team.

PLAYOFF ROUND

Following the elimination round:

- **1st Place** shall automatically qualify for the **Championship Finals.**
- **2nd Place** and **3rd Place** shall compete in a **single do-or-die Semi-Final.**
- The winner of the Semi-Final shall advance to the Championship Finals.

- The loser of the Semi-Final shall be awarded **3rd Place**.
 - **4th Place** shall be eliminated from the tournament.
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CHAMPIONSHIP FINALS

The Championship Finals shall be contested between:

- **1st Place** (Automatic Finals Qualifier)
- **Winner of the 2nd Place vs. 3rd Place Semi-Final**

The Finals shall be played as a **single championship game**, with the winner crowned the **NEHBL Invitational Cup Champion** for their respective division.

TEAM STANDINGS

At the conclusion of the elimination round, teams shall be ranked according to the following criteria:

1. Total Tournament Points
 2. Head-to-Head Result
 3. Point Differential (among tied teams)
 4. Total Point Differential (all elimination games)
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Tournament Summary (Per Division)

Stage		Format
Number of Teams	4	
Elimination Round	Single Round Robin (3 games per team)	
Advancement	1st Place advances directly to the Finals	
Semi-Final	2nd Place vs. 3rd Place (Single Do-or-Die Game)	
Elimination	4th Place	
Championship Finals	1st Place vs. Semi-Final Winner (Single Championship Game)	

4. TOURNAMENT DIVISIONS

The **NEHBL Invitational Cup** consists of two (2) competitive divisions designed to accommodate different levels and communities of basketball players.

A. Open Division

The Open Division is open to all eligible players and only invited teams across the United Kingdom, providing a highly competitive environment for invited clubs and organizations.

Objectives

- Promote high-level competitive basketball.
 - Encourage participation from teams across the UK.
 - Showcase talented players.
-

B. 35+ Division

The 35+ Division is intended to strengthen the local basketball community while providing competitive basketball for veteran players.

Objectives

- Promote basketball among players aged 35 years and above.
 - Encourage local Stevenage-based participation.
 - Foster community engagement and friendly competition.
-

5. TEAM ELIGIBILITY

Each participating team shall register an official roster consisting of:

- **Fifteen (15) Active Players** eligible to participate in tournament games.
- **Three (3) Reserve Players**, who may only become eligible under the conditions set forth in this handbook.
- One (1) Head Coach.
- One (1) Team Manager.

Only players listed on the team's approved roster shall be recognized by the NEHBL Tournament Committee.

Active Roster

Each team may register a maximum of **fifteen (15) active players**.

These players shall be eligible to participate in all tournament games, subject to the rules and regulations of the NEHBL Invitational Cup.

Reserve Players

Each team may register up to **three (3) reserve players** in addition to the active roster.

Reserve players are **not automatically eligible to participate** in tournament games.

A reserve player may only be activated if:

- The team has **fewer than ten (10) active players available** for a scheduled game; or
- An active player is unavailable due to injury, illness, emergency, or another reason approved by the NEHBL Tournament Committee.

The activation of reserve players is intended solely to ensure compliance with the mandatory **5-In 5-Out Player Rotation Policy** and to prevent a team from being penalized due to an insufficient number of available players.

Reserve players must:

- Be included on the team's official tournament roster before the registration deadline.
 - Meet all eligibility requirements for their respective division.
 - Receive approval from the NEHBL Tournament Committee before participating in a game.
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A. OPEN DIVISION TEAM ELIGIBILITY

Teams competing in the **Open Division** must comply with the following:

- Teams may recruit players from **any city or county within the United Kingdom**.
 - Players are **not required to reside in Stevenage or Hertfordshire**.
 - Each team is permitted to register **one (1) Non-Filipino Import Player**.
 - The import player must be declared during team registration and may not be replaced once the tournament has started unless approved by the Tournament Committee.
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B. 35+ DIVISION TEAM ELIGIBILITY

The **35+ Division** is designed primarily for the Stevenage basketball community.

Teams must comply with the following:

- A maximum of **three (5) players** may be registered who **do not reside in Stevenage**.
 - The **majority of the team's registered players must be current residents of Stevenage**.
 - All players must be at least **35 years of age** on or before the opening day of the tournament, unless otherwise approved by the Tournament Committee.
 - Proof of age and proof of residence may be requested by NEHBL.
 - The Tournament Committee reserves the right to verify player eligibility at any time.
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6. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

All players must:

- Be officially registered before the registration deadline.
- Appear on the team's final approved roster.
- Present a valid government-issued identification if requested.
- Play only for the team with which they are officially registered.
- Meet all eligibility requirements for their respective division.

Late player registrations or roster changes will only be considered upon approval by the Tournament Committee.

Division-Specific Eligibility

Open Division

- Players may be recruited from anywhere within the United Kingdom.
- One (1) registered Non-Filipino Import Player is permitted per team.
- No player may compete for more than one team.

35+ Division

- Players must satisfy the minimum age requirement of **35 years old**.
- No more than three (3) players on a team's roster may reside outside Stevenage.
- The majority of the roster must consist of Stevenage residents.
- Players may be required to provide proof of age and residency before participating

Tournament Committee Authority

The NEHBL Tournament Committee reserves the right to verify team rosters, player eligibility, and the activation of reserve players at any time during the tournament.

Any team found to have violated roster or eligibility regulations may be subject to disciplinary action, including player disqualification, game forfeiture, or other sanctions deemed appropriate by the Tournament Committee.

The decision of the **NEHBL Tournament Committee** shall be **final and binding**.

7. UNIFORM REGULATIONS

Teams must wear matching uniforms.

Required:

- Matching jersey color
- Visible player numbers
- Matching shorts

No duplicate jersey numbers.

Players without proper uniforms may be disallowed from playing.

8. GAME RULES

Unless otherwise stated in this handbook, all games shall be played in accordance with the latest **Official FIBA Basketball Rules**, subject to the following NEHBL modifications.

Game Duration

Each game shall consist of:

- Four (4) quarters
- Ten (10) minutes per quarter

Quarter Intervals

- **2 minutes** between the 1st and 2nd Quarters
 - **3 minutes** halftime
 - **2 minutes** between the 3rd and 4th Quarters
-

Playing Time

First Quarter

- The first five (5) registered players shall start the game.
 - At the **5:00-minute mark**, the five (5) players on the court must be substituted with the next five (5) eligible players.
 - Teams are expected to have **ten (10) players available** to complete the mandatory rotation.
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Second Quarter

- The same **5-In 5-Out rotation policy** shall apply.
 - Players who did not participate in the first half rotation must be given priority to enter the game.
 - Teams must continue to follow the mandatory player rotation requirement.
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5-In 5-Out Policy Violation Penalty

If a team has **fewer than ten (10) players available on the court** to complete the required 5-In 5-Out rotation:

- The opposing team shall have the right to select the next eligible players who will enter the game.
- The opposing team may only select from players who are available and have already participated or are eligible to participate.
- Players who have **not yet played during the game shall not be selected** by the opposing team.
- The selected players must remain on the court for the required rotation period.

This penalty is implemented to ensure that teams do not gain an unfair advantage by avoiding the mandatory player participation requirement.

Exceptions

The NEHBL Tournament Committee and referees may consider exceptions only in cases involving:

- Player injury.
 - Player disqualification.
 - Medical reasons.
 - Circumstances beyond the team's control.
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Third Quarter

- **Unlimited substitutions** shall be permitted in accordance with the Official FIBA Basketball Rules.
 - Coaches may freely rotate players during all dead-ball situations where substitutions are allowed.
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Fourth Quarter

- **Unlimited substitutions** shall continue in accordance with the Official FIBA Basketball Rules.
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Game Clock

First to Third Quarter

- The **game clock shall run continuously (running time)**.
 - The clock shall stop only for:
 - Team timeouts
 - Injuries requiring official attention
 - Referee's discretion for unusual delays
-

Fourth Quarter

The **4th Quarter shall be played using stop time**, in accordance with the Official FIBA Basketball Rules.

The game clock shall stop for:

- All whistles
 - Fouls
 - Violations
 - Timeouts
 - Free throws
 - Out-of-bounds situations
 - Any other situations requiring the clock to stop under FIBA rules
-

Shot Clock

- Twenty-four (24) second shot clock.
 - Fourteen (14) second reset following an offensive rebound, in accordance with FIBA rules.
-

Backcourt Rule

Teams must advance the ball into the frontcourt within **eight (8) seconds**, in accordance with FIBA rules.

Player Fouls

A player shall be disqualified from the game upon committing **five (5) personal fouls**.

Team Fouls

A team shall enter the penalty on its **fifth (5th) team foul** in each quarter.

Official Note

The **mandatory 5-player substitution rule during the first and second quarters** is unique to the **NEHBL Invitational Cup** and has been implemented to:

- Promote equal playing opportunities.
- Encourage player participation and development.
- Ensure all registered players contribute during the early stages of the game.

From the **third quarter onward**, games shall be played under standard **FIBA substitution rules**.

9. TIMING REGULATIONS

Teams must arrive:

Minimum 15 minutes before game time.

Warm-up:

5 minutes before the scheduled game.

Late Arrival

At the scheduled start of the game:

- A team may begin the game provided it has **at least four (4) eligible players** present and ready to play.
- If a team has **fewer than four (4) eligible players**, the game shall be declared a **forfeit**.

Forfeit Result

- The opposing team shall be awarded a **20–0 victory**.

The Tournament Committee reserves the right to review exceptional circumstances beyond a team's control; however, all decisions regarding forfeits shall be final.

Note: A team that starts the game with four (4) players may continue the game with four players. However, if at any time during the game the number of eligible players is reduced to fewer than four (4) due to injuries, disqualifications, or other circumstances, the referee may terminate the game in accordance with the Official FIBA Basketball Rules and the provisions of this handbook.

10. PLAYER FOULS

Unless otherwise stated in this handbook, player fouls shall be governed by the Official FIBA Basketball Rules, subject to the following NEHBL modifications.

Personal Fouls

A player shall be disqualified from the game upon committing **five (5) personal fouls**.

All personal fouls, including offensive fouls and unsportsmanlike fouls, shall count toward a player's personal foul total.

Offensive Fouls

An **offensive foul** shall:

- Count as a **personal foul** against the offending player.
 - **Not** count toward the team's accumulated team fouls for the quarter.
-

Unsportsmanlike Fouls

Any **Unsportsmanlike Foul** shall:

- Count as a **personal foul** against the offending player.
- Count toward the team's accumulated **team fouls** for the quarter.
- Be penalized in accordance with the Official FIBA Basketball Rules unless otherwise determined by the Tournament Committee.

In addition to the standard penalty, the referee may report the incident to the Tournament Committee for further disciplinary action.

Disciplinary Authority

The **Game Referees** and the **NEHBL Tournament Committee** reserve the right to impose additional disciplinary measures for any player who commits an unsportsmanlike act.

Depending on the **nature and severity** of the offense, the following actions may be taken:

- Official warning.
- Temporary removal ("sit down") for the remainder of the current quarter or for a period determined by the referee.
- Ejection from the game.
- One-game suspension.
- Suspension for the remainder of the tournament.
- Ban for the future leagues
- Any additional sanctions deemed appropriate by the Tournament Committee.

The referee's decision during the game and the Tournament Committee's disciplinary decision after the game shall be **final and binding**.

Zero-Tolerance Policy

NEHBL maintains a **zero-tolerance policy** toward:

- Fighting or attempting to fight.
- Deliberate dangerous or excessive contact.
- Threatening or intimidating behaviour.
- Abusive, insulting, or discriminatory language.
- Any conduct that brings the league into disrepute.

Players, coaches, and team officials are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of sportsmanship at all times. Failure to do so may result in immediate disciplinary action, including ejection, suspension, or disqualification from the tournament.

11. TIMEOUTS

The NEHBL Invitational Cup adopts the following timeout regulations for all games.

First Half

- **No timeouts** shall be permitted during the **1st and 2nd Quarters**.
-

Second Half

- Each team shall be granted **two (2) timeouts** for the **entire second half** (3rd and 4th Quarters combined).
 - Teams may use their two allotted timeouts at any time during the second half in accordance with the Official FIBA Basketball Rules.
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Overtime

- Each team shall be granted **one (1) additional timeout** for each overtime period.
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Unused Timeouts

- Any unused timeout(s) from the second half **shall not carry over** into overtime.
 - Likewise, any unused overtime timeout **shall not carry over** to any subsequent overtime period.
-

Timeout Administration

Timeouts may only be requested by the Head Coach or an Assistant Coach through the official scorer's table and shall be granted in accordance with the Official FIBA Basketball Rules.

12. OVERTIME

If the score is tied at the end of the fourth (4th) quarter, a **three (3)-minute overtime period** shall be played to determine the winner.

Overtime Duration

- Each overtime period shall consist of **three (3) minutes**.
 - If the score remains tied at the end of an overtime period, additional three-minute overtime periods shall be played until a winner is determined.
-

Game Clock

The overtime period shall be played as follows:

- **First two (2) minutes:** Running time.
 - **Final one (1) minute:** Stop time, with the game clock stopping on all whistles in accordance with the Official FIBA Basketball Rules.
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Timeouts

- Each team shall be granted **one (1) additional timeout** for each overtime period.

- Unused timeouts from the second half **shall not carry over** into overtime.
 - Unused overtime timeouts **shall not carry over** to any subsequent overtime period.
-

Team Fouls

- **Team fouls accumulated during the fourth quarter shall carry over into overtime.**
 - The team foul count shall continue from the end of the fourth quarter, and the corresponding penalty shall remain in effect throughout the overtime period.
 - If additional overtime periods are required, the team foul count shall continue to carry over until the conclusion of the game.
-

This overtime format is unique to the **NEHBL Invitational Cup**, combining **running time for the first two (2) minutes**, **stop time during the final minute**, and **carried-over team fouls** to maintain game flow while preserving strategic play in close contests.

13. STANDINGS

At the conclusion of the Elimination Round, teams shall be ranked according to their **Win–Loss Record**.

The Tournament Point System shall be used for recording game results throughout the tournament. The Tournament Point System shall be used for official records; however, **team standings shall be determined primarily by each team's Win–Loss Record**.

Ranking Criteria

If two (2) or more teams finish the elimination round with identical Win–Loss Records, the following tie-breakers shall be applied in order:

1. **Point Differential** (Total Points Scored minus Total Points Allowed)
 2. **Head-to-Head Result** (if only two teams are tied)
 3. **Total Points Scored**
-

14. PLAYOFF FORMAT

Following the completion of the Elimination Round, the **Top Three (3) teams** in each division shall advance to the Playoff Round.

The **4th Seed shall be eliminated** and will not advance to the Playoff Round.

Semi-Final Matchup

The Semi-Final shall feature:

2nd Seed vs. 3rd Seed

- The Semi-Final shall be played as a **single do-or-die elimination game**.
 - No twice-to-beat advantage shall apply.
 - The winner of the Semi-Final shall advance to the **Championship Finals**.
 - The losing team shall be eliminated and awarded **3rd Place**.
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1st Seed Advantage

The **1st Seed** shall automatically advance to the **Championship Finals** as a reward for finishing as the highest-ranked team during the Elimination Round.

Championship Finals Qualification

The Championship Finals matchup shall be:

1st Seed

vs.

Winner of 2nd Seed vs. 3rd Seed Semi-Final

The Championship Finals winner shall be crowned the **NEHBL Invitational Cup Champion** for their respective division.

15. AWARDS

The NEHBL Invitational Cup shall recognize outstanding teams, players, and individuals from both the **Open Division** and **35+ Division**.

Awards shall be presented separately for each division to acknowledge achievement, performance, and sportsmanship throughout the tournament.

The tournament may award:

- Champions
 - Finals MVP
 - Mythical Five
 - Season MVP
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16. CODE OF CONDUCT

The NEHBL Invitational Cup is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and competitive environment for all players, coaches, officials, organizers, and spectators.

All participants are expected to demonstrate **sportsmanship, respect, discipline, and integrity** at all times.

NEHBL operates under a **ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY** toward any behavior that threatens the safety, respect, and professionalism of the tournament.

Zero Tolerance Policy

The following actions will not be tolerated:

- Physical altercations, fighting, or attempts to initiate a fight.
- Threatening, intimidating, or aggressive behavior toward players, coaches, officials, organizers, or spectators.
- Verbal abuse, excessive profanity, personal insults, or disrespectful remarks.
- Discriminatory, offensive, or inappropriate language.
- Deliberate dangerous plays intended to harm another player.
- Taunting, excessive celebrations, or actions intended to provoke opponents.
- Refusal to follow instructions from referees, tournament officials, or organizers.

- Any behavior that damages the reputation and values of the NEHBL Invitational Cup.
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Player, Coach, and Team Responsibilities

All players, coaches, and team representatives must:

- Respect all referees' decisions and authority.
 - Treat opponents with respect before, during, and after games.
 - Maintain proper conduct on and off the court.
 - Represent their team and the NEHBL Invitational Cup in a positive manner.
 - Encourage fair competition and teamwork.
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Disciplinary Actions

Any violation of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to:

- Verbal warning.
- Technical foul.
- Unsportsmanlike foul.
- Removal from the game.
- Ejection.
- Suspension from future games.
- Tournament disqualification.
- Ban in future leagues.

The severity of the penalty shall depend on the nature and seriousness of the incident.

The **Game Officials and NEHBL Tournament Committee** reserve the right to review any incident and impose additional sanctions when necessary.

Final Authority

The NEHBL Tournament Committee has the final authority regarding all disciplinary matters.

All decisions made by the Tournament Committee regarding suspensions, penalties, and eligibility shall be **final and binding**.

By participating in the NEHBL Invitational Cup, all teams, players, coaches, and officials agree to follow and uphold this Code of Conduct.

17. DISCIPLINARY POLICIES

Any violation of the NEHBL Invitational Cup Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action. The severity of the penalty shall depend on the nature and seriousness of the incident.

Technical Fouls

A technical foul may be assessed for unsportsmanlike behavior, disrespect toward officials, delay of game, or other violations as determined by the referees.

Penalty:

- **One (1) free throw** shall be awarded to the opposing team.
- The opposing team shall be awarded **ball possession after the free throw**.

Additional Regulations:

- A player, coach, or team official who receives **two (2) technical fouls in the same game shall be automatically ejected** from the game.
 - The ejected individual must immediately leave the playing area and may not participate further in the game.
 - The Tournament Committee reserves the right to review the incident and determine if further disciplinary action is required.
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Unsportsmanlike Fouls

An unsportsmanlike foul shall be called for excessive, dangerous, or intentional actions that do not represent fair play and sportsmanship.

Penalty:

- **Two (2) free throws** shall be awarded to the opposing team.

- The opposing team shall be awarded **ball possession after the free throws**.

Additional Regulations:

- An unsportsmanlike foul shall count as:
 - A **personal foul** against the offending player.
 - A **team foul** toward the team's accumulated fouls for that quarter.

Depending on the severity of the incident:

- The referee has the authority to remove the player from the game.
- The NEHBL Tournament Committee may review the incident and impose additional penalties.
- The committee may call out and formally address any player, coach, team official, or spectator involved in unacceptable conduct.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

The NEHBL Tournament Committee maintains the authority to address any form of unsportsmanlike conduct, whether it occurs during a game or outside the playing court.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Excessive arguing with referees.
- Disrespectful behavior toward opponents.
- Threatening or intimidating actions.
- Verbal abuse or inappropriate language.
- Actions that negatively affect the reputation of the tournament.

Depending on the severity of the conduct:

- The referee may issue an unsportsmanlike foul, technical foul, or remove the individual from the game.
- The **NEHBL Tournament Committee may call out and formally address any player, coach, team official, or spectator involved in unacceptable behavior.**
- Additional disciplinary measures may be applied, including warnings, suspensions, or removal from the tournament.

Fighting or Physical Altercations

Any player, coach, or team official involved in a fight or physical altercation shall:

- Be **immediately ejected from the game**.

- Both individuals involved shall be removed from the game regardless of who initiated the incident.
- The opposing team shall be awarded **one (1) free throw** as the game penalty.
- Possession after the free throw shall be determined based on the game situation and applicable basketball rules.

Review and Further Disciplinary Action

- All fighting incidents shall be reviewed by the **NEHBL Tournament Committee** after the game.
 - The Committee shall determine if additional penalties are necessary based on the severity and circumstances of the incident.
 - Additional sanctions may include:
 - Suspension from future games.
 - Removal from the tournament.
 - Further disciplinary action deemed appropriate by the Committee.
 - Ban in future leagues.
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Bench Misconduct

Coaches are responsible for team bench behavior.

Repeated misconduct may result in technical fouls or ejection.

Final Authority

The **Game Officials and NEHBL Tournament Committee** have full authority to enforce disciplinary actions.

All decisions regarding technical fouls, unsportsmanlike fouls, ejections, suspensions, and tournament sanctions shall be final and binding.

The NEHBL Invitational Cup will continue to uphold its **Zero Tolerance Policy** to ensure a safe, respectful, and competitive environment for players, coaches, officials, and spectators.

18. PROTEST PROCEDURE

The NEHBL Invitational Cup allows teams to submit official protests regarding the application of tournament rules. Protests shall only be considered for **rule misapplications** and not for referee judgment decisions.

Eligibility to File a Protest

- Only the **Head Coach or officially designated Team Representative** may file a protest on behalf of the team.
 - The protest must be submitted within **one (1) day after the completion of the game** in question.
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Valid Grounds for Protest

A protest may only be filed for:

- Incorrect application or interpretation of tournament rules.
 - Violation of player eligibility rules.
 - Administrative errors that may have affected the outcome of the game.
-

Invalid Grounds for Protest

The following cannot be protested:

- Referee judgment calls.
 - Foul calls or no-call situations.
 - Out-of-bounds decisions.
 - Shot clock or game clock decisions made by officials during normal game play.
 - Any decision based on the referee's interpretation of a live game situation.
-

Protest Fee

- **No protest fee shall be required** to submit an official protest.
-

Tournament Committee Decision

All protests shall be reviewed by the **NEHBL Tournament Committee**.

The Tournament Committee shall have the authority to:

- Review the submitted protest.
- Gather information from officials and involved teams.
- Determine whether a rule was correctly applied.

The decision of the **NEHBL Tournament Committee shall be final and binding**.

19. OFFICIALS' AUTHORITY

The NEHBL Invitational Cup recognizes referees, table officials, and tournament officials as the authorized representatives responsible for ensuring that all games are conducted fairly, safely, and according to the approved rules and policies.

Referees' Authority

Referees shall have full authority during the game to:

- Enforce the Official FIBA Basketball Rules and NEHBL tournament modifications.
- Make decisions on fouls, violations, and game situations.
- Control the flow and conduct of the game.
- Address player, coach, and bench misconduct.
- Issue technical fouls, unsportsmanlike fouls, and ejections when necessary.
- Stop, delay, or terminate a game if conditions become unsafe or disruptive.

All referee decisions made during live game situations shall be respected by all players, coaches, and team officials.

Table Officials' and Tournament Committee Authority

Table officials are responsible for accurately managing:

- Game clock.
- Scoreboard.

- Player fouls.
- Team fouls.
- Timeouts.
- Official game records.
- Interpret tournament rules and policies.
- Review protests and disciplinary matters.
- Verify player eligibility.
- Issue suspensions or additional penalties.
- Make decisions regarding situations not specifically covered in this handbook.
- Modify schedules or procedures when necessary to ensure the smooth operation of the tournament.

Any scoring or administrative errors must be brought to the attention of the referees and corrected according to the official game procedures.

Respect for Officials

Players, coaches, team officials, and spectators must respect the authority of referees, table officials, and the Tournament Committee at all times.

Any disrespectful, threatening, or abusive behavior toward officials may result in disciplinary action under the NEHBL **Zero Tolerance Policy**.

All decisions made by referees during games and by the **NEHBL Tournament Committee** regarding tournament administration and discipline shall be final and binding.

20. MEDICAL & SAFETY

The NEHBL Invitational Cup is committed to providing a safe environment for all players, coaches, officials, and spectators. However, basketball is a physical sport, and all participants acknowledge the risks associated with participation.

Player Participation

- All players participate in the tournament **at their own risk**.
- Players are responsible for ensuring that they are physically fit and able to participate.

- NEHBL shall not be held responsible for injuries, accidents, or medical conditions that occur during participation.
-

First Aid Availability

- Basic **first aid supplies shall be available at the officials' table** during tournament games.
 - Referees and tournament officials may assist in managing injuries and emergencies until further medical assistance is available.
 - In case of serious injury, appropriate emergency services shall be contacted.
-

Team Responsibilities

All participating teams are encouraged to provide and prepare:

- First aid supplies.
 - Drinking water for players.
 - Emergency contact information for all registered players.
 - Any necessary personal medical equipment or medication required by their players.
-

Injury Management

- Referees have the authority to stop play if a player is injured or if the situation is unsafe.
 - Players with visible bleeding or injuries that may endanger themselves or others must leave the court until cleared to return.
 - The safety of all participants shall take priority over the continuation of play.
-

The NEHBL Tournament Committee reserves the right to take appropriate action in any situation involving player safety, medical concerns, or emergency circumstances.

21. TOURNAMENT ADMINISTRATION

The **NEHBL Tournament Committee** shall be responsible for the overall planning, organization, management, and successful execution of the NEHBL Invitational Cup.

The Tournament Committee shall ensure that all games, teams, officials, and tournament activities operate in accordance with this handbook and the values of the NEHBL.

Tournament Committee Responsibilities

The NEHBL Tournament Committee shall have the authority to:

- Manage the overall tournament operations.
 - Approve team registrations and player eligibility.
 - Verify player rosters and required documents.
 - Prepare game schedules and tournament fixtures.
 - Coordinate with referees, table officials, venues, and participating teams.
 - Enforce tournament rules, policies, and disciplinary procedures.
 - Review protests, disputes, and incidents.
 - Determine penalties and sanctions when necessary.
 - Present awards and recognition after the tournament.
 - Address any situations not specifically covered in this handbook.
-

Rule Interpretation and Amendments

The NEHBL Tournament Committee reserves the right to:

- Interpret any rules, policies, or procedures contained in this handbook.
- Make necessary adjustments to ensure fair competition and smooth tournament operations.
- Amend tournament procedures when required due to unforeseen circumstances.

Any changes or decisions made by the Tournament Committee shall be communicated to participating teams as soon as possible.

Schedule and Operational Changes

The Tournament Committee may make changes to:

- Game schedules.
- Playing times.
- Venue arrangements.
- Tournament procedures.

Such changes may be necessary due to circumstances including, but not limited to:

- Venue availability.
- Safety concerns.
- Emergency situations.
- Unforeseen delays.

The Tournament Committee will make every effort to provide reasonable notice to all affected teams.

Final Authority

The NEHBL Invitational Cup is committed to fairness, transparency, and equal representation in all tournament matters.

The **NEHBL Tournament Committee** and the **official Team Representative of each participating team** shall collectively serve as the tournament's governing body for matters involving disciplinary actions, protests, rule interpretations, and situations not specifically covered by this handbook.

Authority and Decision-Making

The governing body shall have the authority to:

- Review disciplinary cases.
- Determine appropriate penalties for violations of tournament rules and policies.
- Resolve protests involving rule misapplications.
- Interpret tournament rules when clarification is required.
- Decide on matters not specifically addressed in this handbook.

Equal Representation

- Each participating team shall designate **one (1) official Team Representative**.
- Every Team Representative and each member of the Tournament Committee shall have an **equal voice** during discussions.
- All parties are expected to act impartially and in the best interests of the tournament.

Voting Procedure

- Decisions shall be made through a **majority vote** of the Tournament Committee and the official Team Representatives.
- Every eligible voting member shall have **one (1) vote**.
- Any individual directly involved in the incident under review shall **abstain from voting** to avoid a conflict of interest.
- In the event of a tied vote, the **Tournament Director or Chairperson of the Tournament Committee** shall cast the deciding vote.

All decisions made by the **NEHBL Tournament Governing Bodies** shall be final and binding.

By participating in the NEHBL Invitational Cup, all teams, players, coaches, and officials agree to follow this handbook and respect the authority of the Tournament Committee.

All participating teams agree to abide by this rulebook upon registration.

NEHBL FAIR PLAY PRINCIPLES

The **Northeast Herts Basketball League (NEHBL)** is committed to promoting a basketball environment built on respect, integrity, discipline, and sportsmanship.

All players, coaches, officials, organizers, and spectators participating in the **NEHBL Invitational Cup** are expected to uphold the following principles:

RESPECT

Treat all participants with respect, including:

- Opposing players and teams.
- Coaches and team officials.
- Referees and table officials.
- Tournament organizers.
- Spectators and the basketball community.

Respect must be demonstrated through words, actions, and attitude both on and off the court.

INTEGRITY

Compete honestly and fairly by:

- Following tournament rules and policies.
- Respecting official decisions.
- Providing accurate player information.
- Competing with fairness and transparency.

Integrity is the foundation of a successful and trusted basketball competition.

SPORTSMANSHIP

Display positive behavior by:

- Accepting wins and losses with humility.
 - Encouraging teammates.
 - Respecting opponents.
 - Avoiding unnecessary confrontation.
 - Playing the game with fairness and honor.
-

DISCIPLINE

Maintain control and professionalism by:

- Following the instructions of referees and tournament officials.
 - Managing emotions during competitive moments.
 - Avoiding actions that may harm others or damage the reputation of the tournament.
 - Understanding that NEHBL enforces a **Zero Tolerance Policy** for fighting, disrespectful behavior, and misconduct.
-

TEAMWORK

Promote unity and support by:

- Working together with teammates.
- Supporting the development of basketball within the community.

- Building positive relationships among teams and players.
-

COMMUNITY

The NEHBL Invitational Cup aims to bring people together through basketball by:

- Connecting players and teams from different communities.
 - Supporting the growth of basketball in Stevenage and across the UK.
 - Creating a welcoming and enjoyable experience for everyone involved.
-

OUR COMMITMENT

The NEHBL Invitational Cup is more than a basketball competition. It is a platform to celebrate the sport while maintaining the highest standards of **fair play, respect, and professionalism**.

Every player, coach, official, and spectator has a responsibility to represent the values of NEHBL and contribute to a positive basketball culture.

Play Hard. Play Fair. Respect the Game.

NEHBL Invitational Cup 🏀