

Basketball glossary

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assist – player passes the ball to a teammate who scores.

backboard – rectangular piece of wood or glass that holds the basket. “Wood” is slang for backboard.

bench – 12 players make a team, with five players on the court and seven players on the bench waiting to come in to the game.

college divisions – Division 1 teams are the big, competitive college teams. There are also Division 2 and Division 3 teams that are less competitive, called D2 and D3 for short.

D or defense - Good defense needs strong communication between all five players. Good defensive teams block their opponents from shooting the ball.

deuce – two-point shot made from inside the paint, the arch in front of the basket.

dribble – bouncing the ball while standing or moving.

drills – boxing out is a practice drill. One player uses legs and elbows to keep opponents out of the key while attempting to rebound the ball.

dunk – Players use one or two hands to drive the ball into the basket without ever letting the ball leave their hands.

game basics – 10 players (five vs. five) try to dribble or pass a ball from one end of the court to the other and get the ball in a basket 10 feet above the ground.

hoop –the basket rim.

jumpball – when two opposing players both seem to have possession of the ball, the referee blows the whistle. The referee throws the ball in the air and both players jump for it.

key – area near the basket.

layup – bouncing ball off the backboard or directly “laying” the ball into the basket.

pass – players bring the ball to their chest level, and fling their arms to the player they’re passing the ball to.

pick and roll – Player with the ball calls for a teammate to stand still and block the opponent trying to guard him. The player with the ball then moves around the teammate standing still. This gives him a wide open shot at the basket. Any two players can do a pick and roll. Usually the taller player “picks” and the guard “rolls” around him and takes the shot.

rim – metal circle that holds up the basket. The rim is attached to the backboard.

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scrimmage – a game where the score doesn't matter for either team.

trey – three-point shot made from outside the arch or paint.

time periods –

high school – four 10-minute quarters.

college – two 20-minute halves

NBA – four 12-minute quarters.

wind sprints – players practice running from one end of the court to the other until they lose their “wind.”

Player positions

point guard (PG) – smallest and fastest player. PGs must be excellent ball handlers and passers. They often start the play from half court and get everyone in position if a particular play is called by the coach or the captain. They're also usually the second best shooter after the SG.

shooting guard (SG) – best shooters on the team. This player can shoot from anywhere on the court, dribble, steal, and dunk. Often SGs are the team captains.

center (C) – usually the tallest and slowest player. Rebounds the ball and stays in the post (near the basket).

power forward (PF) – shooters and rebounders. They play in the “key” near the basket.

small forward (SF) – small forwards can be both power forwards and shooting guards. They pass, rebound, and drive to the basket.

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