



MELBOURNE WOLVES BASKETBALL CLUB

Excellence in basketball. Unity in spirit. Champions on and off the court.

SBA Rules Every Team Manager and Coach Should Know

Junior competition, U8 to U18

Based on the SBA Competition By-Laws amended 1 June 2026, effective 29 June 2026. These apply to every Melbourne Wolves junior team. By-law numbers are shown so you can check the published version if you like.

New this update, worth knowing before round one

- One category only. The old “emergency player” term is gone. Anyone not registered to your team is a Fill-in Player (section 14, definitions).
- Two-strike suspensions. A second behavioural technical foul in a season is a 2-week suspension, across all SBA competitions including VJBL (33.7).
- Uniform tightened. No jewellery at all, and hair clips larger than a snap clip are not allowed on court (23.4).
- Coach paperwork now lodged through Operandio, and the Member Protection Declaration is annual (7.3, 37.1).

1. Fill-in players

There is now one term. A Fill-in Player is any player not registered to the team they are filling in for. A fill-in may only take a team up to a maximum of 6 players for the game (section 14).

- You may only use a fill-in when the team has fewer than 6 eligible players for that game (14.2).
- Once you elect to use a fill-in, no other registered player may arrive and take the court. The original five plus the fill-in play out the game (14.2).
- A fill-in may play one game unregistered with SBA, but must be registered before their second game, or the team forfeits (14.1).
- A fill-in cannot push the team over the 14 representative points cap. Their points can take the place of an absent player's points (14.3, 14.4).
- A fill-in from a younger age group is not eligible for finals in the older age group unless they are registered to that team (14.5).

Grade and age-group limits.

- A fill-in must not fill in for a team in the same grade, or any grade lower, than the team they are registered in. A U14 A grade player cannot fill in for another U14 A grade team or lower (14.7).
- Same age group, higher grade, up to 3 games a season across any teams. A 4th fill-in in a higher grade ends their eligibility in the lower grade and they must be allocated to a team in the higher grade (14.6).
- Older age group, allowed if that team is the same grade, one higher, or one lower than their own team. Sub-grades count, B covers B1, B2, B3. A U12 C grade player may fill in for U14 B, C or A (14.8).

Breach of any fill-in clause results in a forfeit for your team.

2. Players must play under their own name and number

- A player must never take the court under another player's name. It forfeits the game (15.2).
- Every player must be entered in PlayHQ with their correct name and number before play starts. A player not entered forfeits the game (19.1, 32.8).
- If the scoreboard and PlayHQ disagree, PlayHQ is the record that counts (19.5).

3. Grading, playing up, and how many games players need

Requirement	Rule	By-law
Grading games per player	At least 3. Tell SBA if a player is injured or away and cannot make 3.	11.10
Grading period	Complete by end of round 4. Later re-grading needs CEO approval, and the team's win/loss record does not carry to the new grade.	11.6, 11.7
Playing up an age group	A player may play at most one age group above their own. A U14 can play up to U16, not U18.	13.4
Games per week	No more than 2 SBA junior games in any one week.	13.5
Two teams, same age group	Not allowed to register to two teams in the same age group on different days.	13.6
Finals eligibility	Play 7 fixtured games. Byes do not count. A received forfeit counts as a game played.	22.5, 22.7
Missed games, injury or illness	May be exempted with a medical certificate lodged within 10 days. Pregnancy covered on medical grounds.	22.6

4. Always record a fill-in's details for the game

An unrecorded or wrongly recorded player forfeits the game, even if you won on the floor. This is the most avoidable forfeit there is.

- Enter every fill-in in PlayHQ with full name and correct number before they step on court (19.1).
- A fill-in may play one game unregistered with SBA, but must be registered before a second game (14.1).
- Keep your own note of which fill-ins you used and the date. You need it to track the 3-game cap and the registration trigger below.

5. Registering a fill-in who plays more than once

A quick reference for the repeat-fill-in rules.

Situation	Rule
Fill-in, first game	May play unregistered with SBA.
Fill-in, second game onward	Must be registered with SBA before game 2, or the team forfeits (14.1).
Fill-in playing up a grade, same age group	Counts toward a 3-game cap. A 4th time ends lower-grade eligibility, and they must be allocated to a team in the higher grade (14.6).
Fill-in from a younger age group, for finals	Not finals-eligible in the older age group unless registered to that team (14.5).

Adding a new player to your list mid-season, the club registers them online and adds them to the team before their first game. The club is responsible for adding the player's points. After grading this needs written approval from the SBA CEO (15.1).

6. Scorer requirement and the 10-point penalty

- Each team must provide one competent scorer aged 14 or above before play starts (19.2).
- If the game is ready and you have no scorer, a 10-point penalty is applied by the referees no later than half time.
- Alternative, sit one of your players off to score and play with 4 on court. That player can be subbed, whoever takes their place becomes the scorer.
- The scorer is a game official and must act impartially. Referees can remove and replace a scorer (19.7).
- Scoring queries go to the referee before the end of the game, raised by the coach or team manager (19.4). Scores cannot be changed after finalising unless a by-law forfeit applies or the Referee Supervisor finds an error on the day (19.6).

7. Forfeits, walkovers and fines

- Not on court 10 minutes after the scheduled start, the opposition is awarded a 20-0 walkover (29.1).
- The walkover fine is \$150, payable within 7 days, with a \$50 late fee after that (32.6).
- The fine is waived only if you give SBA 7 days notice that the game will be forfeited (32.7).
- If you know midweek you cannot field a team, tell the club early so notice reaches SBA in time.

8. Timing, time-outs and substitutions

- Two 20-minute halves, 2-minute warm up. Junior half time is 2 minutes (17.1, 17.2, 17.4).
- Two time-outs per half (17.8).
- A time-out cannot be called with less than 3 minutes on the clock, unless in a semi-final or grand final (17.9).
- A substitution cannot be called with less than 2 minutes on the clock, except for injury, 5th foul, disqualification, sin-bin or blood (17.11).
- Time in the key, U12 and below 5 seconds, U14 and above 3 seconds (17.13).

9. Uniforms and equipment

Not allowed to take the court (23.4).

- Only compression or performance garments underneath, compressed against the skin, in black, white or the dominant singlet colour, and all players the same solid colour.
- No shorts with pockets, zips or buckles. Taping pockets or turning shorts inside out is not allowed.
- No jewellery of any kind, including rings, earrings, facial piercings, bracelets, necklaces or watches.
- No free-moving hair braids or barrettes, no metal headbands, and no clips larger than a snap clip.

Reverse the jersey (23.5).

- Numbers must be on the front and back, printed or sewn. Taped, written or faded numbers are not allowed. Numbers may be 0, 00 through 99 (23.2).
- On a colour clash the first team listed on PlayHQ reverses.

Grace period and penalty (23.6, 32.3).

- A 3-round grace at the start of the season. After round 3, inconsistent singlets or shorts cost 5 points per item per person. Not applied in grading games.

10. Coaching junior defence, U14 and below

Man-to-man requirement (24).

- All U14 and below teams must play full court or half court man-to-man for the whole game. No other defensive structure is allowed.
- Trapping is the only exception. Players may leave their opponent to trap the ball carrier, but the team must always start in man-to-man (24.2).
- The Referee Supervisor is the sole judge of a breach (24.3).
- The coach gets one warning, then 2 shots and possession to the opposition for each further infraction (24.4).
- No penalty where a player lacks the skill to execute it and the coach is making a genuine effort (24.5).

Fall-back rule (25).

- The leading team falls back inside the 3-point line once the opposition has clear possession, at 15+ points U10 and below, 20+ U12 and U14, 30+ U16 and above (25.1, 25.2).
- The team must still play man-to-man from the 3-point line while fall-back is in play (24.6, 25.2).
- The trailing team's coach can elect to waive it (25.3). Fall-back does not apply during the grading phase (25.5).
- One warning, then 2 shots and possession to the opposition (25.4).

11. Coach accreditation and child safety

Required before coaching or assisting in any SBA junior game, and lodged through Operandio (7.3, 37.1).

Requirement	Renewal
Working with Children Check, via PlayHQ	Every 5 years
Basketball Victoria Member Protection Declaration, via PlayHQ	Annually
Play by the Rules, Safeguarding Children and Young People in Sport	Online course
Play by the Rules, Harassment and Discrimination	Online course
Participation Coaching Course, previously Community Course Level 0	Once

- SBA runs random checks during the season. If a coach is not compliant and does not fix it within 7 days, the team's season points reset to zero (37.3).
- A once-off emergency fill-in coach must show a valid Working with Children Check to the club before coaching (37.4).
- The Participation Coaching Course can be exempted only with evidence the next available course is booked (37.5).

12. Technical foul suspensions

The 29 June 2026 by-laws set a two-strike system for behavioural technical fouls (33.7).

Behavioural technical fouls in a season	Consequence
1st	The club is emailed a warning naming the participant, with the penalty for a second foul spelled out.
2nd	A 2-week suspension, effective immediately on notice.
Each further foul, same season	An additional 2-week suspension.

- Suspensions apply across all SBA competitions, including VJBL. A participant who also referees is suspended from refereeing on the same terms (33.7).

Sin-bin (33.8).

- A behavioural technical foul, or a criteria 1 or 2 unsportsmanlike foul, sends the player off immediately. They cannot return until 5 minutes of playing time has elapsed, timeouts not counted. A substitute may cover.
- Non-behavioural technicals, such as delay of game, faking a foul or hanging on the rim, do not trigger the sin-bin.

On-court conduct (33.2, 33.3, 33.6).

- Only the head coach, or the team manager if no coach is present, may speak to referees, and only at time-outs or half time. No one else during play.
- Spectators cannot question or comment on a referee's decision and may be asked to leave the stadium.
- Anyone ejected from a venue cannot return to any SBA venue until the end of the day's competition.

Questions, or an unusual situation on game day, contact the club at hello@melbwolves.com.au.