

Basketball Time!

Jordan played baseball. It was her favorite sport. The other sports were fun, and she liked swimming, too, but basketball definitely was her favorite sport. In fact, her dad was a big basketball fan, and had even named her after a famous basketball player!

Basketball is a pretty cheap sport to play in terms of equipment. So long as you have shoes and clothes and a ball, you can play. You can play with 1 hoop or 2, but it is way more fun to have a full court to play on and several friends to do it with. Of course, you can have knee braces, expensive shoes, and some fancy jerseys if you want, but you can play without them if you want.

Basketball is a game of 5-on-5. There are tournaments with 1-on-1, 2-on-2, or 3-on-3, but official games are played with 5 players per team. There are 5 different positions: point guard, shooting guard, center, small forward, and power forward. These are kind of like hockey and soccer positions, in that some positions are more defensive and some are more offensive. Unlike some other sports, all players can score points, and there is NO goalkeeper. There isn't a boring position to play!

Basketball has 4 quarters. Teams switch directions of play after each quarter. For pro games, quarters are 15 minutes. The clock keeps moving unless there are fouls, the ball goes out of bounds, or if the whistle blows.

Jordan played as a point guard. That meant she was just about the fastest person on the team. It was her job to get the ball to the right person to score. She was a coordinator, the type that got lots of assists and made big plays happen.

Referees watched the teams play and watched for things like tripping, charging, and double-dribbling. In basketball, you can dribble (bounce) the ball as you walk or run up the court, but once you stop dribbling, you can't start again. You have to pass the ball to another player or shoot toward the basket. Some players are good at blocking shots or at stealing passes. Basketball is a very fast sport, moving back and forth quickly.

Normal shots in the game are worth 2 points. These are anything from layups where you drop the ball into the hoop or short shots from the court. If you're far enough out, beyond the 3-point line, shots are worth more. After a foul, you may get chances to shoot for bonus points.



These free-throws are worth 1 point each if you make them in. With only 5 people on the court and shots being worth 1-3 points, scoring in games can be pretty high. Some teams manage to score more than 100 points in a game!

Jordan knew not everyone loved her sport as much as she did. She just couldn't get enough of the excitement. There was a lot of running, fast passes, and some great jumping! Basketball is pretty big in America – it was invented here after all! Basketball is an Olympic sport, too. Many countries have their own leagues, and it is especially popular in East Asia.

Are you going to try to watch or play basketball?



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Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. What sport does Jordan play?
 - A. Baseball
 - B. Basketball
 - C. Soccer
 - D. Football

2. What kind of parts is a basketball game divided into?
 - A. Halves
 - B. Quarters
 - C. Periods
 - D. Innings

3. What position does Jordan play?
 - A. Center
 - B. Power Forward
 - C. Point Guard
 - D. Small Forward

4. TRUE OR FALSE: Basketball was invented in America.
 - A. True
 - B. False

5. TRUE OR FALSE: There are 5 players per team in basketball.
 - A. True
 - B. False

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