ORIGINAL ARTICLE

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

ISSN: 2692-515-x, Impact Factor: 9.23

American Academic publishers, volume 6, issue 03,2026

Journal: https://www.academicpublishers.org/journals/index.php/ijai

BASKETBALL AND ITS VARIETIES: MINI-BASKETBALL AND STREETBALL

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Abstract: This article examines the history, rules, and characteristics of basketball and its two widely popular variants — mini-basketball and streetball (3x3). A comparative analysis of each discipline is provided, including their impact on the physical and psychological development of participants, as well as the prospects for the advancement of these sports in Uzbekistan.

Keywords: basketball, mini-basketball, streetball, sports games, physical education, team sports, street sport, sports pedagogy.

1. Introduction

Basketball is one of the most dynamic, spectacular, and popular team sports in the world. Spanning more than 200 countries and territories, the game unites millions of people regardless of age, gender, or social status. Today, basketball is represented not only in its classical five-on-five format, but also in a number of interesting variants, each possessing unique characteristics and rules.

In the context of contemporary sports development in Uzbekistan, the popularization of basketball among young people — particularly through accessible formats such as mini-basketball and streetball — is of special relevance. The government is actively developing sports infrastructure and creating conditions for the training of world-class athletes.

The purpose of this study is to comprehensively examine basketball, mini-basketball, and streetball as interrelated phenomena, to reveal their pedagogical potential, and to substantiate practical recommendations for their integration into educational and training processes.

2. History and Development of Basketball

Basketball was invented in 1891 by Canadian physician and educator James Naismith in Springfield, Massachusetts, USA. The initial purpose of the game was to provide students with an engaging activity during the winter months between the American football and baseball seasons. Naismith attached two peach baskets to the balcony railings of a gymnasium and formulated 13 original rules.

As early as 1936, basketball was included in the Olympic Games programme in Berlin. The International Basketball Federation (FIBA) was founded in 1932. Today, basketball has become one of the most popular sports on the planet: annually, more than 450 million people across various countries regularly engage in this sport.

In Uzbekistan, basketball has been actively developing since the Soviet era. The national team has repeatedly participated in Asian championships and international competitions. Today,

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hundreds of basketball sections and clubs operate throughout the country, and the national league and national championship attract an ever-growing audience.

3. Classic Basketball: Rules and Characteristics

Classic basketball is played by two teams of five players on a rectangular court measuring 28 × 15 metres. The objective is to shoot the ball into the opponent's basket and score more points than the opposing team. Basketball rules are governed by official FIBA documentation.

3.1. Basic Rules of the Game

– Match duration: 4 periods of 10 minutes (FIBA rules) or 4 periods of 12 minutes (NBA rules).
– Ring height: 3.05 metres from the floor.
– Three-point line: 6.75 metres from the centre of the ring.
– 24-second rule: the team must attempt a shot within 24 seconds.
– Scoring system: free throw — 1 point; field goal inside the arc — 2 points; shot from beyond the three-point line — 3 points.

3.2. Physical and Psychological Qualities of a Basketball Player

Basketball develops a comprehensive range of physical qualities: speed, endurance, coordination, and strength. Furthermore, the game actively fosters tactical thinking, teamwork, and leadership skills. Research demonstrates that regular basketball training improves cardiorespiratory indicators, reduces the risk of cardiovascular diseases, and contributes to overall health improvement.

4. Mini-Basketball

Mini-basketball is a variant of basketball developed specifically for children aged 6 to 12 years. It represents an essential instrument of primary sports preparation, enabling children at an early school age to master the techniques, tactics, and rules of basketball.

4.1. Distinguishing Features of Mini-Basketball

– Court: reduced compared to the standard court (20 × 14 metres).
– Ring height: lower — 2.60 m for younger children, 2.90 m for older children.
– Ball: lighter and smaller than the standard basketball.
– Team composition: 5 players per side.
– Strict rotation rule: every player is obligated to play an equal amount of time on the court.

4.2. Pedagogical Value of Mini-Basketball

Mini-basketball plays a key role in the system of youth sports. Adapted rules and court dimensions allow children to master technical skills — dribbling, passing, and shooting — more rapidly. The game develops team skills, fair play, and discipline, contributing to the harmonious physical and psychological development of the child. In Uzbekistan's schools, mini-basketball is included in the physical education curriculum from the 1st–2nd grade.

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5. Streetball: Urban Basketball

Streetball (from English 'street' + 'ball') is a variant of basketball involving two teams of three players competing on a single basket. Its origins trace back to 1-on-1 games in African-American neighbourhoods of New York City in the 1950s. FIBA officially recognised streetball as an independent discipline under the name '3x3' in 2007. Since 2021, 3x3 basketball has been included in the Olympic Games programme.

5.1. Basic Rules of Streetball (3x3)

– Court: half of the standard basketball court (15 × 11 metres). One basket is used.
– Match duration: 10 minutes of running time or until a team reaches 21 points (whichever comes first).
– Scoring system: shot from inside the arc — 1 point; shot from beyond the arc — 2 points.
– Ball possession: after a successful basket, possession transfers to the defending team without inbounding from the sideline.
– No timeouts: the game proceeds at a faster and more dynamic pace.

5.2. Advantages of Streetball Over Classic Basketball

Streetball possesses a number of unique advantages. First, no dedicated sports hall is required: a single basketball backboard and a small asphalted area are sufficient. Second, organising competitions demands significantly less time and financial expenditure. Third, the 3x3 format is highly popular among young people, which facilitates the recruitment of new participants into the sports movement.

6. Comparative Analysis of Disciplines

The table below presents the key characteristics of the three basketball disciplines for comparative assessment:

Criterion	Classic Basketball	Mini-Basketball	Streetball (3x3)
Players per team	5	5	3
Duration	4 × 10 min (FIBA)	4 × 6 min	10 min or 21 pts
Baskets	Two	Two	One
Court size	28 × 15 m	20 × 14 m	15 × 11 m

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Criterion	Classic Basketball	Mini-Basketball	Streetball (3x3)
Ring height	3.05 m	2.60–2.90 m	3.05 m
Target age group	All ages	6–12 years	Youth & adults

Each discipline occupies its own niche: classic basketball develops team thinking and tactical coordination; mini-basketball is ideally suited for the initial instruction of children; and streetball, owing to its accessibility and dynamism, actively attracts young people and ensures mass participation in sport.

7. Development of Basketball in Uzbekistan

7.1. State Policy in the Field of Sport

The development of physical culture and sport in Uzbekistan is one of the priority areas of state policy. In 2021, the State Programme for the Development of Physical Culture and Sport for 2021–2025 was approved, envisaging the construction of new sports facilities, the training of coaching personnel, and the mass engagement of the population in sport. Within the framework of ongoing reforms, multipurpose sports complexes and open basketball courts are being actively built in mahallas, schools, and parks across the country.

The Basketball Federation of Uzbekistan (UzBF) has been a member of FIBA since 1992 and regularly holds national championships for both men's and women's teams. In recent years, UzBF has carried out a large-scale reorganisation: a coach licensing system has been introduced, uniform competition standards have been approved, and a youth basketball academy has been established.

7.2. Mini-Basketball in Uzbek Schools

Mini-basketball occupies a special place in the physical education system for schoolchildren. In accordance with the current physical education curriculum, elements of basketball are included as a mandatory component from the primary grades. An annual republican mini-basketball tournament for students is held, with teams participating from all 14 regions of the country. More than 40 youth sports schools with basketball departments operate throughout the country, serving over 8,000 students.

In the Jizzakh region, mini-basketball is also actively developing: local schools participate in regional competitions, and the most talented students are directed to the regional representative teams. The Ministry of Public Education, jointly with UzBF, has developed methodological manuals for physical education teachers, adapted to the age-specific characteristics of children, significantly enhancing the quality of instruction.

7.3. Streetball 3x3: From Courtyards to the Olympic Games

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Streetball in Uzbekistan is experiencing a genuine surge. Following the inclusion of 3x3 basketball in the programme of the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo, interest in this discipline increased sharply. The national 3x3 basketball team participates in international FIBA tournaments. In major cities — Tashkent, Samarkand, Namangan, Bukhara, and Jizzakh — specialised streetball courts have been opened.

Under the 'Sports Mahalla' programme, open basketball courts with 3x3 markings have appeared in hundreds of residential quarters across the country. The annual 'Uz Street Battle' tour brings together thousands of participants and spectators, creating a talent-identification system for national teams.

7.4. Challenges and Proposed Solutions

Despite significant achievements, the development of basketball in Uzbekistan faces a number of challenges. First, there is a severe shortage of qualified coaching personnel, particularly in the regions. Second, the material and technical infrastructure of most schools and clubs does not meet contemporary standards. Third, there is an imbalance between metropolitan and regional basketball: the majority of strong clubs are concentrated in Tashkent, while regional centres, including Jizzakh, suffer from a lack of resources.

To address these challenges, it is necessary to: organise systematic retraining of coaches with the involvement of international FIBA experts; establish public-private partnerships to finance regional clubs; create a student basketball league with participation from all universities; and expand scholarship programmes for talented athletes from the regions. Special attention should be paid to the development of women's basketball, which currently lags behind men's basketball in terms of coverage and funding.

7.5. The Role of Basketball in the Education of Medical Students

Basketball holds particular relevance for students in medical and pharmaceutical specialisations. Future physicians and pharmacists must not only lead healthy lifestyles themselves, but also be competent advisors to their patients on matters of physical activity. Basketball serves as an effective preventive measure against obesity, type-2 diabetes, cardiovascular disorders, osteoporosis, and depression.

Research demonstrates that students who regularly engage in team sports exhibit higher levels of academic performance and stress resilience. At Kazan Federal University, including its Jizzakh branch, physical education is regarded as an integral component of professional training: regular participation in sport fosters discipline, endurance, and teamwork among future pharmacists and physicians — precisely the qualities required in professional practice. Accordingly, the integration of mini-basketball and streetball into the physical education curriculum of medical universities in Uzbekistan represents a pedagogically substantiated decision.

Conclusion

Basketball and its variants in the contemporary world represent not merely sports disciplines, but an important social institution that contributes to the physical and moral education of young people. Classic basketball, mini-basketball, and streetball form a unified ecosystem in which each discipline occupies its unique niche.

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For the further development of basketball in Uzbekistan, it is necessary to: expand the network of sports facilities in districts and regions; train qualified coaches; actively integrate mini-basketball into school curricula; and create more open streetball courts for young people. Collectively, these measures will contribute to the advancement of sports culture and healthy lifestyles throughout the country.

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