

MERCY RULE

What is a Mercy Rule?

A Mercy Rule is a defensive restriction helping to promote sportsmanship in junior basketball. In simple terms the defence is required to drop back to within the 3pt line when they are 20pts or more in front.

The formal wording of the rule is as follows:

This rule shall apply to all games except grading games and finals. It shall apply to all age groups whenever one team has a lead of 20 points or more. The rule shall require the team in the lead to retreat behind the three-point line, in defence, in defence, whenever the opposition gain possession, from an inbound or field play.

It is strongly advised that the leading team plays a man-to-man defence inside the three-point line, not a zone.

The penalty for infringement of the mercy rule shall be calling a violation on the offending team and returning the ball to the other team at the three-point line extended.

The rule shall be enforced by the referees with the intervention of the person in charge of the venue if necessary.