



YOUTH BASKETBALL

Welcome to the Westport Parks and Recreation's Youth Basketball program for grades 2-12. This program is designed to be fun and enjoyable for the boys and girls participating as well as the volunteers who dedicate their time to coach and administrate the officials, the staff and the parents. Please help us continue the success of this program by reading this packet fully as a family. This contains policies, procedures and other vital information you will need to know about the program. We also invite you to visit our web site at www.westportbasketball.org to find out more program information.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission at Westport Parks and Recreation is to develop and/or maintain a sense of well being and self-satisfaction through activities and experiences that are conducted either for pleasure or for achievement of physical, social or emotional successes. Programs are developed and planned by our professional and qualified staff to emphasize education and entertainment in a safe and positive leisure setting for reasonable fees. Our ultimate goal being, to have fun and create a feeling of well being through organized activities where health, education and social adjustment are the underlying foundation.

The promotion of all-around development of the participants, and meeting their needs and desires is essential. To accomplish this, we must instill a high level of motivation and personal satisfaction within staff members and the participants involved in our programs. The idea of having fun through organized activity while putting emphasis on health, physical fitness and a feeling of well being is our ultimate goal. We want every participant to gain something from his/her experience in our program that promotes a positive attitude, fosters self-confidence and contributes to their social and emotional needs.

The Town of Westport has embraced the philosophies set forth in "National Standards for Youth Sports," a publication compiled by the National Alliance for Youth Sports. The following Standards were established:

Standard #1 – Proper Sports Environment

Parents must consider and carefully choose the proper environment for their child, including the appropriate age and development for participation, the type of sport, the rules in the sport, the age range of the participants, and the proper level of physical and emotional stress.

Standard #2 – Programs Based on Well-Being of Child

Parents must select youth sports programs that are developed and organized to enhance the emotional, physical, social and educational well-being of children.

Standard #3 – Drug, Tobacco, and Alcohol-Free Environment

Parent must encourage a drug, tobacco and alcohol-free environment for their children.

Standard #4 –Part of Child's Life

Parents must recognize that youth sports are only a small part of a child's life.

Standard #5 - Training

Parents must insist that coaches be trained and certified.

Standard #6 – Parents' Active Role

Parents must make a serious effort to take an active role in the youth sports experience of their child providing positive support as a spectator, coach, league administrator and/or caring parent.

Standard #7 – Positive Role Models

Parents must be a positive role model exhibiting sportsmanlike behavior at games, practices, and home while giving positive reinforcement to their child and support their child's coaches.

Standard #8 – Parental Commitment

Parents must demonstrate their commitment to their child's youth sports experience by annually signing a parental code of ethics.

Standard #9 – Safe Playing Situations

Parents must insist on safe playing facilities, healthful playing situations and proper first aid applications, should the need arise.

Standard #10 – Equal Play Opportunity

Parents, coaches, and league administrators must provide equal sports play opportunity for all youth regardless of race, creed, sex, economic status or ability.

Standard #11 – Drug, Tobacco & Alcohol-Free Adults

Parents as coaches, fans, and league administrators must be drug, tobacco and alcohol-free at youth sports activities.

VOLUNTEERS

The Youth Basketball program is administered through the Westport Basketball Association and Parks and Recreation. The Board consists of a volunteer group of 15-20 community residents who work diligently all year round with Parks and Recreation to make sure the youth basketball program is a continued success. **We are currently seeking board members for assorted grades. If you are interested, please contact Cyndi Palaia, Cpalaia@westportct.gov.**

The Youth Basketball program also encompasses some 200 volunteer coaches each year. We need these volunteer coaches so that the youth of our community can be provided the opportunity to play the sport in a safe, healthy and positive environment. If a parent/guardian is interested in coaching on either a head coach or assistant coach level, please go to www.westportbasketball.org and click on the bright REGISTER NOW button on the home page. From there click on the league you are interested in coaching in and fill out the application. There are 3 main requirements for coaching which include NYSCA coaching certification, an up to date background check and NYSCA concussion training. For further information, you can contact **Cyndi Palaia, Program Manager, at 203-341-5087 or at Cpalaia@westportct.gov.** All coaches must have those 3 items complete before being considered to coach a team.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. Program Specifics:

The basketball program begins on Wednesday, November 6 and Saturday, November 9 with evaluations and ends on March 1 for those children in grades 2 -8. After evaluations, your child will be assigned to a team and contacted by that coach to begin practice the week of November 25th. From there on, your child will have a one-hour practice a week and one game per week through March 19. Games are tentatively scheduled to begin on Saturday, December 7th and Wednesday, December 11th. The grades 9 – 12 program will start games on January 7 and run through March 19th. More information will be available on the website as the season progresses. Here is some more pertinent program information:

1. Grades 2 and 3 must practice during the week at either 5:00 pm or 6:00 pm
2. Grades 4 – 8 may practice during the week any time between 5:00 pm and 9:00 pm. Usually the earlier time slots are given to the younger participants first and then work forward.
3. Grades 9 - 12 do not have scheduled practices. Games only.
4. Boys and girls in grades 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 play games on Saturdays while boys and girls in grade 7 play games on Wednesday evenings.
5. Boys in grades 9/10 play games on Tuesdays. Boys in 11/ 12 play games on Thursdays. These leagues do not start until January 7nd due to the high school team tryouts in December.
6. There are no evaluations for the high school leagues and teams will be created in December after the start of the high school basketball season. **Those players who will be playing on any high school basketball teams are not eligible to play due to CIAC regulations.**
7. The youth basketball calendar follows the school calendar. When school is closed for vacations, holidays or inclement weather or dismissed early for inclement weather, our program is also closed. **THE PROGRAM DOES OPERATE ON SCHOOL IN-SERVICE DAYS IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY.**
8. **PROGRAM CANCELLATION:** Inclement weather may cancel practices and/or games. Cancellation information may be obtained by calling our cancellation line at (203) 341-5074 or by logging into Facebook or Twitter. To follow us on Twitter - @westportparkrec and like us on Facebook at Westport Parks and Recreation. Our website will also send out cancellation notices when time allows

2. Program Standards

There are no requests for team assignments, practice nights or coaches. We understand everyone has other activities going on besides basketball but we can't cater to one child when we have 1,600 in the program. Once assigned to a team, the child is expected to attend each practice and each game. While we do have rules for equal playing time in a game, coaches have the choice of waiving this rule if the child HAS NOT consistently attended practice. Children participating in other sports such as travel basketball, hockey, indoor soccer or skiing or children with consistent conflicts may not be eligible to take part in our program if they can not meet the practice and game commitment. Please take this into consideration when signing your child up as every year we turn children away due to lack of space only to find we have children registered for the program that never show up due to other commitments. The Basketball Advisory Board will make the decision of dismissing a child from the program if they feel the child's attendance has been poor and there is no commitment to youth basketball.

All children are required to attend their respective league's evaluation. PLEASE DO NOT SHOW UP AT ANY TIME THAT IS CONVENIENT FOR YOU. We have a set a schedule so that children and parents do not have to wait long. Deviating from this will cause havoc and long lines. If your child has a conflict due to finishing a fall sport, please contact your league commissioners to let him or her know and they will tell you when to come. At the time of the evaluation, you will be asked for three (3) nights between Monday and Friday that your child can attend practice. We will do our best to make sure your child is placed on a team that is good for him/her. Please understand we can't cater to everything your child is involved with and sometimes the available practice nights do not coincide with your requests. Remember that practices occur between 5 and 9 pm so please check your child's schedule PRIOR to attending evaluations. Once your child is assigned to a team, THERE IS NO SWITCHING.

3. Equipment:

Children in all grades will be receiving a team shirt. This is to be worn for games along with shorts, socks and sneakers. We recommend they wear black shorts. Those children receiving jerseys that are sleeveless that choose to wear a t-shirt underneath must have the same color t-shirt as the jersey. Socks and sneakers must also be worn. DO NOT CUSTOMIZE YOUR GAME SHIRT BY CUTTING THE SLEEVES OFF OR RIPPING IT UP – You will not be allowed to play. For practices, your game jersey, shorts/sweats, socks and sneakers are required.

- a. **Sneakers are mandatory – no street shoes, loafers, Heelys or platform sneakers. Even running sneakers or tennis sneakers are not good. We highly suggest having a reasonable pair of sneakers made for basketball. Sneakers for other sports are not made to take the abuse basketball puts on your ankles and feet and could cause injury.**
- b. **Do not wear/bring jewelry, watches, iPods, phones, etc. to games or practices. We are not responsible for them being lost or stolen and they are not allowed on the court. No earrings – PLEASE.**
- c. **A water bottle is allowed for players only – but NO COOLERS OR SPORTS DRINKS.**
- d. **You need to bring your own basketball to practice but please make sure it is clearly marked with your name and phone number. We are not responsible if you lose it. There are different size basketballs for different grades. You can purchase them at ASF or Olympia Sports.**
 1. **Girls, grades 2, 3 and 4 and boys, grade 2 and 3 use a junior size ball which is 27.5 inches in circumference.**
 2. **Girls, grades 5 – 12 and boy's grades 4 and 5 use a standard women's size ball which is 28.5 or an official WNBA ball.**
 3. **Boys, grades 6 – 12 use an official men's size ball which is 29.5 – 30.0 or an official NBA ball.**

4. **Transportation:**

Children enrolled in the program should be dropped off NO EARLIER than 5 minutes prior to their scheduled practice or game time and must be picked up IMMEDIATELY after their practice or game. Consistent lateness in either dropping off or picking up is cause for dismissal from the program. The police will be notified of children left unsupervised for long periods of time.

The coaches and the staff will be responsible for your child that is registered for the program during the time they are required to be in attendance only. Siblings, friends and/or neighborhood children are not to be left with the child participating in the program. This is cause for immediate dismissal from the program. Please do not ask. Children in grades 2 – 8 cannot be dropped off to watch friends play games as we ask that they be supervised at all times.

5. **Gymnasium Rules:**

The Westport Parks and Recreation Department and the Westport Basketball Association are guests of the Board of Education when using the gyms. They are their facilities and we have to abide by their rules. There is no eating of any kind of food at any time as well as no drinking of any items at any time. This includes but is not limited to **COFFEE**, Danish, donuts, soda, juice, cookies, fruit and the like. Water fountains are available for spectators in the gymnasium vicinity. **Water bottles are allowed for participants.**

We ask that parents who bring children to the program to watch the participant and are not participating to monitor them and keep them in control at all times. This is not the job of the staff or the coaches. Children are not to be running in the hallways, around the gym, jumping on mats or found loose in the parking lots or on stages. Parents who choose not to supervise their children will be expelled from the gymnasium and their child could be dismissed from the program if the situation warrants. Do not be offended if our staff speaks with you about your unsupervised children.

Most gyms do not have seating for spectators. If you don't want to stand or sit on the floor, we recommend you bring a folding chair with you for comfort. Dragging chairs from the cafeteria or library or stacking mats to sit on is not allowed.

There are no animals or pets of any kind allowed in the school facilities at any time.

During inclement weather, muddy shoes and boots will not be allowed in the gym. It is best if the participants carry their sneakers with them into the school and then change their footwear. Parents and spectators must also take note of this policy and abide accordingly.

Everyone must pick up after themselves. The staff and the coaches are not personal attendants for everyone. There is no lost and found so any items that are left behind will be thrown out. Occasionally, the site supervisor will keep items week to week since they see the same groups all the time. If you lose something, check with the site supervisor of the facility you were in as there is a good chance they will have it.

The youth basketball program is limited to the gymnasium only and the closest bathrooms and water fountains. No one is to be roaming the school hallways, in classrooms or the cafeteria. Do not be offended if our staff tells you to leave a place you should not be. **WE ARE NOT ALLOWED TO LET CHILDREN GO TO THEIR LOCKERS IF THEY FORGET THINGS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY – PLEASE DON'T ASK.**

Parents and spectators are expected to show sportsmanship at all times by demonstrating positive behavior and support for all players, coaches and officials. If anyone chooses not to, they will be asked to leave the facility immediately and will be expelled from the program. We will not tolerate any verbal or physical abuse towards coaches, officials, players, staff or other parents and spectators. Please read the Parent's Code of Ethics at the end of this manual. This is the same one you have signed at registration. Please abide by it. **We do take this seriously.**

6. Complaint Procedures:

If a parent encounters a problem with their child participating in the youth basketball program, please contact your appropriate league commissioner in writing stating your complaint. Make sure you include your child's name, grade and team he/she is playing on. Once received, the commissioner will review and take the necessary steps to resolve any problems. For a list of board members and their respective leagues, go to www.westportbasketball.org and click on Board tab. You can then send them an email and then it will be reviewed. You can also send a message to Cyndi Palaia at Westport Parks and Recreation at cpalaia@westportct.gov

7. Unacceptable Behavior:

Any child exhibiting poor and/or unacceptable behavior consistently will be dismissed from the program with no refund. Discipline problems will not be tolerated. All children are expected to respect the staff, coaches and anyone involved in the youth basketball program.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM PARKS AND RECREATION

The Westport Parks and Recreation Department wants this to be an enjoyable program for both you and your child. We have taken steps to make sure your child is in a setting that we believe is safe and healthy for them. Our coaches are now fully trained, educated and certified through the National Youth Sports Coaches Association. Thorough background checks are also done on all volunteers in our program AND we have begun concussion education and training as well. Our officials are members of the International Association of Approved Basketball Officials and our staff is highly motivated, experienced and certified in First Aid and CPR.

WHAT WE EXPECT OF OUR PARENTS

- *Respect the youth sports environment
- *Never criticize a child for making a mistake
- *Focus on the fun and participation, not winning
- *Get interested in your child's sport
- *Never undermine team morale
- *Make only positive, encouraging comments to all
- *Respect the officials
- *Control emotions
- *Learn the rules of the sport
- *Participate in team activities
- *Discuss any concerns away from the players and in particular, the child
- *Seek feedback from your child on whether they are having fun or not, and if not, why?
- *Make every effort to get the child to practice and games on time
- *Refrain from tobacco, drugs and alcohol at all youth basketball events

All parents should attend the mandatory parent's meeting for their child's team when it is formed. Coaches will contact you to let you know.

PARENT'S CODE OF ETHICS

I hereby pledge to provide positive support, care and encouragement for my child participating in youth basketball by following this Parent's Code of Ethics Pledge:

- I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches and officials at every game, practice or other youth basketball event.
- I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my child ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will insist that my child play in a safe and healthy environment.
- I will support coaches and officials working with my child in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
- I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free of drugs, tobacco and alcohol and will refrain from their use at all youth basketball events.
- I will remember that the game is for youth – not for adults.
- I will do my very best to make the youth basketball program fun for my child.
- I will ask my child to treat other players, coaches, fans and officials with respect regardless of race, sex, creed or ability.
- I promise to help my child enjoy the youth basketball experience by doing whatever I can such as being a respectable fan or assisting with coaching.
- I will require that my child's coach be trained in the responsibilities of being a youth basketball coach and that the coach upholds the Coaches' Code of Ethics.

WHAT WE EXPECT OF OUR PARTICIPANTS

The following is a list of responsibilities that the Westport Parks and Recreation Department has developed for the participants to adhere to:

- **Players will listen to their coaches and be respectful of their elders.**
- **Players will take care of the facilities, equipment, and uniforms, which they are given.**
- **Players will make sure to eat the right foods and drink plenty of water before and after practices and games.**
- **Players will avoid all types of taunting and belittling remarks to their teammates or opponents.**
- **Players will show good sportsmanship at all times, win or lose.**
- **Players will not make sports a priority over schoolwork or family.**
- **Players will refrain from horseplay and all other dangerous activities, in which they may become hurt.**
- **Players will participate for the love of the game and competition and not to win at all costs.**

Players Code of Ethics

I hereby pledge to be positive about my youth sports experience and accept responsibility for my participation by following this Players' Code of Ethics Pledge:

- I will encourage good sportsmanship from fellow players, coaches, officials and parents at every game and practice by demonstrating good sportsmanship.
- I will attend every practice and game that I can, and will notify my coach if I cannot.
- I will expect to receive a fair and equal amount of playing time.
- I will do my very best to listen and learn from my coaches.
- I will treat my coaches, other players, officials and fans with respect regardless of race, sex, creed, or abilities and I will expect to be treated accordingly.
- I deserve to have fun during my sports experience and will alert parents or coaches if it stops being fun!
- I deserve to play in an environment that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and expect adults to refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- I will encourage my parents to be involved with my team in some capacity because it's important to me.
- I will do my very best in school.
- I will remember that sports are an opportunity to learn and have fun.