

# VAA Traveling Basketball Handbook



## Boys/Girls Traveling Basketball 2024-2025 Season

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## INTRODUCTION & TRAVELING BASKETBALL PHILOSOPHY

Welcome to the Valley Athletic Association (VAA) Traveling Basketball program. The program is for athletes in grades 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Traveling basketball is a more competitive level of play than Community or In-House Basketball. It is a larger time commitment compared to community basketball. The program is created to provide a fun, fair and challenging environment for players to develop their basketball skills.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this handbook is to assist parents and players in understanding the VAA Traveling Basketball program including the tryout process and how teams may be formed and managed. Any discrepancy will be interpreted and resolved by the VAA Traveling Basketball Board, hereafter known as "Board". The Board reserves the right to edit this document at any time for benefit of the program.

Travel teams compete in 8 tournaments that have been selected in advance by VAA for 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade boys. 6 tournaments will be scheduled for 4<sup>th</sup> grade and below. One state tournament will also be paid for by VAA. Any additional tournaments will be at the cost of the individual teams. Tournaments are held on weekends and games are typically played Saturday and Sunday, with an occasional Friday evening game. Some tournaments may also be a one-day tournament so you could play all of your games on a Saturday or all games on a Sunday.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> -4<sup>th</sup> grade program will have 6 tournaments and may have fewer practices during the year. The intention is to give those younger kids more basketball than a typical community program and also a feel for traveling basketball.

For the girls' program in 2024-2025, we will be offering 6 tournaments plus one state tournament. Any additional tournaments will be at the cost of the individual teams. Tournaments are held on weekends and games are typically played Saturday and Sunday, with an occasional Friday evening game. Some tournaments may also be a one-day tournament so you could play all of your games on a Saturday or all games on a Sunday.

### **Travel Team Fees:**

Fees to participate on Travel teams are as follows:

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Boys - \$250

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Girls - \$250

4<sup>th</sup> Grade Boys - \$250

4<sup>th</sup> Grade Girls - \$250

5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade Boys - \$375

5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade Girls - \$250

Uniform Fee: \$100 dollars for a uniform if you do not have one from last year you can use

Paid Coach: We prioritize volunteer parent coaches, but almost half of our teams last year did not have a qualified candidate and it added \$150 dollars to each players fees.

In addition to the above fees, the estimated additional costs per family could range from \$100 - \$250. These costs include admission fees for the tournaments, expenses of traveling to and from the tournaments, food costs and may include overnight lodging if one is scheduled for your team (no out of town tournaments are planned for this upcoming season).

Practices will start the second week of October and the season concludes with the State Tournament in early-March. If you are participating in traveling basketball, the expectation is that other activities should not conflict with any scheduled tournament or practice. Parents will be given a tournament schedule at, or before, the first practice. It is expected that family vacations will not conflict with the team's tournament schedule. VAA will not schedule tournaments or practice over Thanksgiving weekend, however; due to the longer Christmas/New Year's break, time may be made available to any team who would be interested in hosting an optional practice.

Participating in Travel basketball is a privilege requiring a significant time commitment from the player and their family. If participants are unable to make that commitment, they should not participate in the Travel program.

### **PLAYER ELIGIBILITY**

A player is eligible to participate in VAA sponsored Traveling Basketball under the following criteria:

- Attends a school associated with Apple Valley High School
- Must have registered prior to the registration deadline and paid all required fees and
- Must be in 3<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade for the current school year. 2nd grade players will be able to participate according to the play up rules listed below. 1st graders or lower will not be allowed to participate under any circumstances.
- MYAS transfer rules will be followed by VAA Traveling Basketball for those interested

Player moves into the VAA area during the season:

After tryouts have been completed and teams have been formed, if a prospective player(s) moves into the VAA boundary, the family must contact the Traveling Basketball commissioner for a request to be added to a team. Such requests will be evaluated on a case by case basis. If there is room on a team and the coaches approve, the request may be approved after these conditions have been met:

- a) The board will contact the player's previous association for input on the player's past team placement.
- b) The player will be subject to a tryout and evaluation from VAA Traveling basketball board members or approved evaluators. The traveling basketball board will then inform the players on the team they will be placed on.
- c) The family must meet player eligibility requirements listed above.
- d) The players family has been notified of and agree to the registration fee, parent volunteer hours for the Traveling basketball hosted tournament and the tournament volunteer check has been received.

### **PLAY-UP**

The Board believes that in rare circumstances, it is in the players and program best interest to allow players to play-up a grade based on the following rules:

1. 2<sup>nd</sup> grader wanting to play up to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade will be allowed to tryout under the following conditions:
  - a. 3<sup>rd</sup> grade team needs additional players as determined by the Board.
    - i. NOTE: 3<sup>rd</sup> graders will not be cut to make room for a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade player.
2. 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and up wanting to play up a grade level will be allowed to tryout under the following condition:

- a. Board was notified of intent of player wanting to play up, and the board will consider all factors, including, but not limited to the number of participants at both grade levels.
  - b. Must try out at both grade levels
3. In all play up situations, a player will only be allowed to play up given the following tryout results.
  - a. Player tries out and ranks #1 at their current grade level
  - b. Player tries out at the upper grade level and must be ranked in the top 2 of the older age group
  - NOTE: #1 or #2 of the play up rules must be met first before #3 will be considered.
  - Exception: If a player ranks #1 at their current grade and “A” level is not being offered, special consideration will be made to place this child at the upper grade “A” level if the player ranks in the top four positions.
4. If the Board needs to combine grades due to quantity of players or participants skill set, this will not fall under the play up policy.

## **WAITING LIST**

If a player misses the registration deadline, they will be put on a Waiting List. If after the registration closes and prior to tryouts, the Board determines that additional players are needed, then any player who is placed on the waiting list will be contacted. This will be done on a first come first serve basis. The players on the waiting list will then have to complete the registration and pay the registration fee prior to becoming a registered player and will then be allowed to try out.

If after tryouts it is determined that additional players are needed, the Board may recruit players (from the community program, other associations, etc.) to fill a team and those players will be placed on the lower team at the grade level.

## **TEAM FORMATION**

### **1) Number of Teams**

- A)** There will be a max of three teams per grade.
- B)** Team formation could be of multiple grade levels.
- C)** After registration closes, the Board will determine the number of teams based on the registrations.

### **2) Players Per Team**

Teams may have from 8 to 10 players on the roster. The Board believes 8 on a team is the ideal number and will strive to achieve this number on a team whenever possible, including cuts and/or recruitment of players not registered. In extremely rare cases, a team may go up to 11 per team. All but the final two spots on each team will be filled by those players with the highest rankings by the evaluators. The final two spots on each team will be selected by the Head Coach, chosen from the pool of next highest ranked players remaining at each age level. In the event the the coach’s child is not in a locked position, a three-member committee from the board

will choose the final two spots. Coaches, or the three-member committee if applicable, will have the following to assist in this selection:

- Previous Year's Evaluation (if available)
- Possible need on team (height, ball handler, etc)
- Evaluator's rankings and notations remaining players at each age level

### **3) Evaluation**

- A)** Tryouts will be used to measure each individual's talent and skill level as well as the depth of the travel talent pool.
- B)** VAA will use evaluators to run the tryouts and also to give player rankings.
- C)** Evaluations and player rankings will be provided to the traveling basketball commissioner and to members of the traveling basketball board of directors prior to the formation of teams.

### **4) Cuts**

*In the rare event that cuts are made;* it will be handled by doing the following:

- Receive a refund for Traveling Basketball minus the VAA administrative fee of \$30 and tryout fee of \$25.
- Player can choose to be placed on a Community Basketball team if one exists at that age level. Player would be required to register and pay for Community Basketball.

## **TRYOUTS**

A tryout process selects all Traveling Basketball teams.

Tryouts will be conducted in a "closed" gym. In other words, once all participants have arrived, a brief explanation of the tryout process will be given to the participants. At this point everyone except participants, evaluators, and a Board member designee will be asked to leave the gym. The Board will be able to enter the gym but only for administrative purposes and they will not have any influence on the try-outs.

Participants should not wear any identifying clothing including: camp or clinic shirts, team apparel or clothing with their name on it.

An evaluator conducts the tryouts and evaluates the participants. The Board member designee will administer the tryout and be present in the tryout.

All participants will be evaluated on a standard set of skills. These skills consist of Shooting Skills (lay-ups, jump shots, etc.), Ball Handling Skills (dribbling with both hands, control, etc.), and Passing Skills (chest pass, bounce pass, receiving passes etc.). In addition, the participants will be evaluated on overall basketball abilities (this would include team play, defense, rebounding, court awareness etc.) These skills are evaluated via 1 on 1, 2 on 2, 3 on 3, 4 on 4, and 5 on 5 drills.

A player must attend all sessions to be selected for the highest-level team at their age group. Vacations, family commitments, or other sports activities are not reasons that will allow a player to

miss a tryout session. Uncontrollable or unforeseeable family emergencies preventing attendance will be dealt with on a case by case basis by the Travel Commissioner and board.

### **INJURY OR ILLNESS ABSENCE**

A player who has registered for tryouts and cannot participate due to an injury or illness will be excused, prior to the start of the tryout session, upon delivery of a doctor's note describing the player's limitations. A player excused due to injury or illness must present a signed doctor's release indicating that the player is medically fit before he will be allowed to participate in any VAA activities. A player who misses any of the scheduled tryout sessions due to any injury or illness may be placed on a team at the discretion of the Board based on using past team placement or previous coach input.

### **SELECTION OF COACHES**

Anyone interested in coaching is eligible. Selection of coaches will be the responsibility of the Board. All those applying to coach will be interviewed by the Board and will be subject to a background check that is conducted by VAA. In addition, all coaches have to complete a Mandatory Concussion in Youth Sports training and any other State mandated training.

If no parent volunteers for a coach, it is the responsibility of the parents to seek out and find a paid coach option. The board will help with potential connections, but the parents will need to drive the process. If no coach is found and no parent steps up to coach the team will not proceed with the season

Coaches will be selected after the tryouts. Therefore, by you volunteering to coach will have no impact on your child's team placement.

### **NOTIFICATION OF TEAMS**

Tryout participants will be informed of whether they made a traveling team and which team they made via an internet posting and email.

A few items to keep in mind:

1. Our goal is to make sure every kid that registered is getting the opportunity to play. It is the Board's expectation that all families will honor their commitment to the program. **Therefore, should a family decide not to accept their placement, no refund will be issued.** In addition, any player not honoring their placement will need board approval to be allowed to participate in future years.
2. With any tryout process, it is not perfect. There will always be "bubble" players and some will move up to one team and some will move down to another team.
3. All kids develop at different ages. Do not let the team placement discourage your child.

4. If your child is placed on a team with a player listed as “TBD”, the Board is working with other communities to find a few additional players to fill the team.
5. If your child is placed on a team with a coach listed as “TBD”, we need a head coach. If you are interested in coaching please contact Matt Becker @ Matt.Becker@vaasports.org  
If circumstances arise where a paid coach is being considered or necessary to fill a coaching vacancy, the Board will pay a portion of the cost for this coach, however; each family on the team would pay an additional \$150.00 to the coach to help offset the coaching expense.

## **PLAYING TIME POLICY**

Grades 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> – Playing time should be a ratio of 50/50. The coach may adjust playing time to be competitive during a tournament, but should be equal by the end of each tournament. Playing time may vary from game to game. If you believe that your child is not getting an “equal” amount of time, please discuss it with the coach. If you are still not satisfied, then please see the problem resolution guidelines shown below. See exceptions.

Grades 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> – Playing time should be a ratio of 60/40 over the course of the season. Playing time may vary from game to game. If you believe that your child is not getting a 60/40 amount of time, please discuss it with the coach. If you are still not satisfied, then please see the problem resolution guidelines shown below. In a typical game, the 60/40 split works out to be approximately 10 minutes per half, however; there may be in game situations where this doesn’t occur, but over the course of the season, the 60/40 ratio should be followed. See exceptions. \*Playing time assumes 20 minute halves.

Grades 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> – Playing time should be a ratio of 70/30 over the course of the season. Playing time may vary from game to game. If you believe that your child is not getting a 70/30 amount of time, please discuss it with the coach. If you are still not satisfied, then please see the problem resolution guidelines shown below. In a typical game, the 70/30 split works out to be approximately 7.5 minutes per half, however; there may be in game situations where this doesn’t occur, but over the course of the season, the 70/30 ratio should be followed. See exceptions. \*Playing time assumes 20 minute halves

**Exceptions:** All players should play in every game and each half unless; 1) the player is being penalized for unexcused absences, 2) if the coach deems the player injured and not physically able to participate, or 3) because of a disciplinary action. Disciplinary actions must be communicated to the parents and the Board.

## **UNIFORM POLICY**

We will use the same uniform as the 2023/2024 season with the plan to get a new design in 2025/2026. If your current uniform fits, you do not need to pay for an additional uniform. If you need new shorts or a shirt, please select them when you register. They are \$50 dollars each.

Each year, a new shooting shirt will be provided and is included in the registration fee.

## **GYM TIME**

Please note the Traveling Basketball program competes for gym time with other athletic sports and civic activities. Due to the restricted availability of gym time, any day of the week can be a potential practice day. Also, practices can be as early as 4:40 PM on weekdays and go as late as 10:00 PM in ISD 196 schools and surrounding communities.

### **VAA SPONSORED TOURNAMENT**

Each year VAA sponsors our own Tournament. The revenue after expenses from the tournament is used to reduce individual participation fees. Therefore, it is expected that parents or guardians of each child in the traveling program work at their appropriate tournament. To ensure total commitment, it is required that each family submits a check for \$300.00 per child prior to the tryout. If you fulfill your assigned commitment, the check will be returned/destroyed. If your work commitment is not fulfilled, the check will be cashed and added to the tournament revenue. Please note that your child will not be placed on a team until your \$300.00 check is received. If we do not receive your check and your child is not placed on a team, no refund will be issued for your registration.

### **PROBLEM RESOLUTION GUIDELINES**

When a player or parent has a concern or a question regarding the policies or procedures of Traveling Basketball, they should follow the steps below to resolve the issue:

1. Any concerns or issues should not be addressed until at least 24 hrs after the incident and should not be addressed at any game or tournament.
2. Bring the issue to the attention of the coach of the team involved and work to bring about a solution to the problem.
3. If the problem persists or cannot be resolved between the player, parent and the coach, it should be brought to the attention of your Age Director who will act as a mediator between the player/parent and the coach.
4. If the problem persists or cannot be resolved at that level, it should be brought to the attention of the Traveling Basketball Commissioner. Again, if necessary, all parties may meet to discuss the situation and find a solution.
5. If mediation still is unable to resolve the issues, and all of the above steps have been followed, the parents or commissioner may submit a letter stating the issues in question to the Executive Committee of the VAA.

### **SUGGESTIONS**

If you have suggestions for improving the program, the best way to communicate them is to include them on the evaluation form you are asked to complete at the end of the season. Please include as much detail as necessary to understand what you would like to see implemented. In addition, you can submit any suggestions to any board member at any time.

**I hereby pledge to live up to the VAA Parents' Guidelines as well as acknowledge the information provided in the VAA Traveling Basketball Handbook.**

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Parent Signature

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Date

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Printed Name

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Child Name/Grade



**REMINDERS FROM YOUR CHILD:**

- I'm a **KID**
- It's Just a **GAME**
- My Coach is a **VOLUNTEER**
- The Officials are **HUMAN**
- **NO** College Scholarships will be Handed Out Today

*Thank you and Have Fun!*

