

# Prior Lake Girls Basketball



**Team Handbook**

***"Play Hard, Play Smart, Play Tough,  
Play Together"***

# Prior Lake Girls Basketball

## Parent/Player Handbook

**Purpose of Handbook:** The purpose of the Prior Lake Girls Basketball Parent Handbook is to share important beliefs, expectations, and details about the basketball program. We hope you take time to read through this handbook so you will better understand our philosophies and expectations of your daughter while she is a member of the Prior Lake Girls Basketball program.. We try to constantly create a “family atmosphere” within our program. We hope that you as parents always feel a part of the “Prior Lake Basketball Family” for years to come, even after your daughter has moved on from high school. We urge you to come to games to cheer on your daughter and the team, volunteer to help with team activities, and to stay active within the program. You will continue to be a vital part of the success of this program.

**Thank You:** First and foremost, you as parents deserve a huge “thank you” for all that you do. Parents are an integral part of any program, and we want to make sure we express our gratitude to you for everything you do for your daughter, our school, and our program.

**My Purpose Statement:** *I coach the game of basketball because of the wonderful opportunity it allows me to bring a group of individuals together to build a team, develop positive relationships, and strive for excellence on and off the court. The game of basketball teaches so many valuable life lessons about competition, attitude, respect, and handling adversity. I love the challenge that coaching brings to help our players not only learn the game, but help guide them through the numerous life lessons that can be learned through athletics.*

**Philosophy of Program:** The Prior Lake Basketball program will consist of individuals who **respect** one another in all parts of life. All members of the Prior Lake Basketball program will play with class, integrity and respect. We will play with the **L.A.K.E.R. WAY**. We will work hard and we will play with great **enthusiasm** in practice and in games. We will have winning attitudes, do the right thing, will strive to learn at each moment and play with great intelligence. These skills will prepare athletes for life beyond basketball. Most importantly, we are a **TEAM** and each member of our team is merely an extension of every other player, coach, and individual in our program. These traits will allow us to reach our greatest potential, and in turn be successful in all we do. **In short the L.A.K.E.R. WAY is a standard on and off the court:**

1. **Leadership**
  - a. Leadership is a high standard of behavior in all aspects of life. All the time.
  - b. Leaders know when to follow, and when to lead. They give more than receive.
2. **Accountability**
  - a. Being responsible for one’s one actions and reactions.
  - b. Be reliable to yourself and your teammates.
3. **Kompetitiveness**
  - a. Play hard and compete to make yourself and others better. It will enrich your life!
  - b. Be consistent in your work ethic. We all have bad days, bt bring your best version of the day to the court. You and your teammates deserve it.
  - c. **Be Tough:** Mentally and Physically - Have Poise.
4. **Enthusiasm**
  - a. Be coachable and positive.
  - b. Always fill your passion bucket! Commit to excellence and commit to expressing yourself on the court.
  - c. Feel the joy. Joy is when you see your teammate take a charge and you *have* to run to her before the last echo of whistle. **Joy is a love for the game and your teammates, and the work to improve those around you.**
5. **Respect**
  - a. Simple: Do what is right: Make good decisions especially when no one is watching.

<p><b>Coaches Contact Information:</b>  Varsity Coach Ethan Walker  <a href="mailto:ewalker@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us">ewalker@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us</a>  <b>Varsity Assistant:</b> Suzi Furber  <a href="mailto:sfurber@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us">sfurber@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us</a></p>	<p><b>JV Coach:</b> Coach Peter Linskey <a href="mailto:Pclinskey@gmail.com">Pclinskey@gmail.com</a>  <b>10th Grade/"B" Squad Coach:</b> Coach Britney Sherber  <a href="mailto:bsherber@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us">bsherber@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us</a>  <b>9th Grade Coach:</b> Coach Jon Stokes  <a href="mailto:Jstokes@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us">Jstokes@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us</a></p>
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**ROLES:** *“Coaches coach, players play, bus drivers drive the bus.” - Author Unknown.* As coaches, parents, players, referees, or even bus drivers, we all have different roles in any athletic program. It is important that everyone understands their role and the expectations in their role.

**Coaches’ Roles:** Below are the expectations I have for myself as a coach and leader. I have these same expectations for all coaches in our program.

1. Teach valuable life skills (**L.A.K.E.R. WAY**) through the game of basketball.
2. Teach the game of basketball.
3. Communicate roles and expectations with players. Communicate strengths and weaknesses with players.
4. Be approachable.
5. Be program and TEAM orientated.
6. Be disciplined and prepared.
7. Be positive with players and officials.
8. Model positive sideline behavior.
9. Keep it simple.
10. Focus on us and what we can control.

**Players’ Roles:** Below are the expectations that we have for our players. Please note that each and every player has control over these attributes.

1. Have a positive attitude
2. Embrace your team role and understand that roles change throughout the season
3. Have a LAKER WAY mentality
4. Be committed, prepared, and on time
5. Be coachable
6. Give your best effort
7. Support and encourage your teammates; be accountable to your teammates
8. Display positive sportsmanship
9. “Be yourself and be better.”

**Parents’ Roles:** Roles are important on any team. Parents have a very important role in the program. We feel that the following roles are very important for parents to follow:

1. Support/encourage your daughter and the program. You might not always agree with every decision made by a member of the coaching staff, and you might not always agree with decisions made by players, but please be there to support your daughter on and the program in a positive manner. We as coaches try to make decisions in the best interest of the program, our team, and the kids involved in our program, so please be supportive of your daughter and our basketball program.
2. Be a “Prior Lake Laker Fan”. Sometimes as parents we focus in on our children, and we become more concerned with the success of our own child, rather than the success of the team. Please remember to cheer for the Prior Lake TEAM and to be a fan of all members of the team when they are playing. Refrain from gossiping or talking about another player, coach, or program and engaging in negative conversation.

3. Display good sportsmanship. Please positively represent the Prior Lake community at each game by showing good sportsmanship towards referees, coaches, players, and fans from our school and other schools. We constantly ask our players and coaches to focus on what we can control. We believe that this is an extremely valuable life lesson that teaches responsibility.

**Goals:** We have three essential goals for our players that relate to the LAKER WAY

1. **ATTITUDE**

- a. **Have a Winning Attitude:** The one is the one thing we can control every day of our life is our attitude. When things go wrong, or adversity strikes, the one thing we can always control is our response or our attitude. We expect our players to have a great attitude. This life lesson may be the most important one that we hope our players learn.

2. **EFFORT**

- a. **Play Hard.** The value of hard work can never be underestimated. We hope that the lessons of hard work that your daughter gains from basketball will help her in any area of her life, both in the present and in the future. We often use the phrase “*No Deposit, No Return*” as our mantra of the value of hard work.
- b. **Play Smart.** Playing smart has dual meanings. We want our players to be smart players on the basketball court. We want to be a team that does all of the “little things” necessary to be successful. We also want our players to be “play smart” off the court. We expect our players to be good students, good role models, and make “smart” choices.
- c. **Play Tough.** We want our players and our team to be tough both physically and mentally. We will talk about what it means to be tough all season long. Having poise and showing mental toughness when adversity strikes are what separates average teams from great teams.

3. **TEAM**

- a. **Play Together.** Teamwork and togetherness are extremely important in our program. These are life-long lessons that we hope to teach your daughter. Also, we try to create a “family atmosphere,” where your daughter can feel like she belongs with a special group of people that care about her as a person. This family atmosphere will remain for her, even after she has graduated and moved on, because she will always be an important part of this tradition rich program.

**Finally, we want all of our players to have fun.** High school sports should be memorable experiences that foster life-long relationships and memories. We want to create an environment in which your daughter will have a positive experience that will be enjoyable for her.

**Team Philosophies and Playing Time:** Below you will find a description of each team and our philosophy for playing time with each team:

1. **9th Grade:** The focus of this team is skill development and teamwork while implementing the Prior Lake Basketball system. Participation is very important at this level. Kids are still growing into their bodies at this level. Coaches will do their best to provide quality playing time for all players. Playing time may be based on skill level, personnel, game situations, and other factors like attitude, conduct, and attendance. Playing time decisions are solely at the coach’s discretion and are not debatable. Coaches are focused on teaching the core values of the the L.A.K.E.R. WAY with an emphasis on **enthusiasm**.
2. **“B” Squad Team:** The focus of this team is skill development and teamwork while implementing the Prior Lake Basketball system. We do look to provide each individual with playing time throughout the season, but playing time will not be equal. Playing time and its equality amongst players will be at the coach’s discretion, based on skill level, personnel, game situations, and other factors like attitude, conduct, and attendance. Playing time decisions are solely at the coach’s discretion and are not debatable. Coaches are focused on teaching the core values of the the L.A.K.E.R. WAY with an emphasis on **accountability**.

3. **Junior Varsity Team (JV):** This team will continue to build upon the skills, teamwork, and expectations of our program that were introduced in 9th grade basketball. Our focus is to put the most competitive team we can on the court to try and win the basketball game. Playing time will not be equal at this level, and all playing time decisions will be at the coach's discretion and are not debatable. In addition to commitments to skills and teamwork, other factors such as skill level, personnel, game situations, attitude, conduct, and attendance are taken into account when determining playing time. JV players have an invaluable role in game planning and preparing for varsity games. Here is where the L.A.K.E.R. Way is practiced in full.
4. **Varsity:** The Varsity basketball team will be made up of the very best players in the entire program, regardless of grade level. The goal of varsity competition is to put together the best representative basketball team that Prior Lake can provide. Those individuals who display strong basketball skills and a solid commitment to the team will be players that have a strong chance of earning playing time at the varsity level. Decisions about playing time will be made based on what is best for the varsity team at the given moment during the season. These decisions will not be debatable, and these decisions are at the coaches' discretion. In addition to commitments to skills and teamwork, other factors such as attitude, conduct, and attendance are taken into account when determining playing time. Here is where the L.A.K.E.R. Way is practiced in full.

**Communication:** We will do our best as coaches to communicate information to players and parents as soon as possible. Schedules can be found at "Southsuburbanconference.org" under Prior Lake calendars. Many times, dates, and details are outlined in the player notebooks, but if there are changes, the coaches will let the players know about those changes as soon as possible. Here are some specific instances that involve communication, and then our policies for each instance:

1. **Excused Absences:** All players in our program are making a commitment to their coaches and teammates to be a member of the TEAM. Attendance at practice and games is mandatory unless a player is ill or has an extenuating circumstance that has been cleared with the coach. If a player is going to be absent from a game or practice, they must work to contact the coach ahead of time. Valid reasons for a player to miss a practice or game may include: Family Emergency, Medical appointment, Faith event, or School related event. Unacceptable reasons to miss a practice or game include: haircut, work, etc. Players who miss practice for unacceptable reasons may risk playing time and team membership (coach's decision is final in this regard). Players must be in attendance for a full day of school or have an excused absence in order to practice or play in a game that evening. Reasons for missing a part of the day that would constitute an excused absence would be a funeral, appointment, etc. as per school policy.
2. **Sickness:** If a player is sick for any part of the school day and misses any portion of school for sickness, she is not eligible to participate in practice or a game that evening.
3. **No Secrecy:** If parents wish to discuss their daughter, she must be present. If an issue needs to be discussed, a parent and the player need to be present.
4. **Riding the Bus Home After Games:** All JV/Varsity players are expected to ride the bus home after games. If there is a situation when a player needs to ride home with a parent from a game, the player will be excused to leave with a parent only if a parent provides a written signature in advance to the Activities Office and their varsity staff. excusing the player to ride home with parents. For lower levels (10th and 9th), players may ride home with their parents only from away games, and players must inform the grade level coach.
5. **24 Hour Rule:** After games, please refrain from approaching a coach to discuss an issue regarding your daughter, the game, or anything related to basketball. Instead, please wait until the next day to contact the coach. Often times after games, the adrenaline is flowing for all involved, and discussing the situation the next day is more beneficial for everyone. Also, please contact a coach via e-mail to set up a time to meet.

6. **Non-Debatable Issues:** Playing time, game strategy, scouting, and other personnel matters are decisions made by coaches for the betterment of the team. Discussions of other players on the team will not be tolerated. These issues are not debatable.
7. **Chain of Communication:** Players and parents are expected to follow the proper chain of command when dealing with a problem or concern:
  - a. Player talks to the coach at their level (9th, 10th, JV, V)
  - b. Player and parent talks to the coach of their team
  - c. Player talks to the varsity coach
  - d. Player and parent talks to the varsity coach
  - e. Player and parent talks to the athletic director and coach
8. **Contacting a Coach:** Please contact a coach at school, not at home, unless it is an emergency. Time at home is family time for the coaches, so please contact a coach at school if possible.

**Expectations and Policies:** The following is a list of expectations and policies specific to the Prior Lake Basketball Program.

1. **Academics:** Academics are priority #1. It is important that Prior Lake Girls Basketball players take pride in academic work in the classroom. Your education will carry you farther than basketball. We follow the academic eligibility expectations set forth by Prior Lake High School. Players who are not committed in the classroom risk practice time, playing time, and team membership.
2. **Team Membership:** Team membership is a privilege. Players are expected to meet the rules, policies, and expectations of the MSHSL, School District, and Prior Lake Girls Basketball Team. Any player that has a severe infraction of these expectations or a repeated pattern of behavior that is detrimental to the team may be suspended from team activities or removed from the team. Any player who chooses to quit during the season will lose team membership for the rest of the season. The team and program come first. The coach's decision will be final.
3. **Player Conduct:** Our players and coaches are expected to be ambassadors of the Prior Lake School Community. They are expected to represent the Prior Lake Community with class, pride, and respect:
  - The girls basketball team will abide by the high standards set by Prior Lake High School. Any behavior that is deemed unbecoming of a Prior Lake student-athlete will be dealt with following the MSHSL and schools code of conduct.
  - We expect our players to always display good sportsmanship; players are told not to argue a call from a referee. We as coaches will address any situations with referees.
  - Players are to provide a positive image to the rest of the school and community. You are looked upon in very high regard by many people in the community, especially the younger kids, always remember this and represent the team in a positive manner.
  - Prior Lake Basketball players will not partake in any substances that will hurt themselves and others. We will abide by school policy for conduct and consequences for any substance abuse issues concerning alcohol, drugs, and tobacco. Please refer to the good conduct policy for consequences.
  - **Social Media:** Playing and competing for Prior Lake is a privilege. Student athletes are held in the highest regard and are seen as role models for our community and school. Players have a responsibility to portray their team and school in a positive manner at all times. Players should be aware that what you put online can be viewed by anyone and at anytime; what you post is public information. If you are ever in doubt to the appropriateness of your online public material, ask yourself if it upholds and positively reflects your own values and ethics as well as the values of your family, Prior Lake High School, and our basketball program. In short, do not have a false sense of

security to your rights to freedom of speech. Understand that freedom of speech is not unlimited and does not equal freedom from consequences. Maintain a self-image that will make you, your family, your school, and team proud for many years to come.

- Social Networks: Social network sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Tiktok, and other digital platforms and distribution mechanisms facilitate communication among students. Participation in such networks may have both positive appeal and potentially negative consequences. It is important that our students be aware of these consequences and exercise appropriate caution if they choose to participate.
- Students are not restricted from using any on-line social network sites and digital platforms. However, users must understand that any content they make public via on-line social networks or digital platforms is expected to follow acceptable social behaviors and comply with federal government, state of Minnesota, Prior Lake, and MSHSL rules and regulations. Students are accountable for the guidelines for in the Prior Lake Student Handbook as well as Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) regulations.

#### **Behaviors to Avoid on Social Media:**

1. Derogatory language or remarks about teammates, other students, coaches, teachers, administrators, or representatives of other schools.
2. Demeaning statements about or threats to any third party.
3. Incriminating photos or statements depicting violence; bullying; hazing; sexual harassment; vandalism; stalking; underage drinking; selling, possessing, or using controlled substances; or any other inappropriate behaviors.
4. Creating a serious danger to the safety of another person or making a credible threat of serious physical or emotional injury to another person.
5. Indicating knowledge of an unreported felony theft or felony criminal damage to property.
6. Indicating knowledge of an unreported school or team violation—regardless if the violation was unintentional or intentional.

#### **4. Lettering:** In order for players to earn a varsity letter, one of the following requirements must be met:

- Members of the varsity team and/or who are part of the the section roster will receive a letter.
- If they have been on the varsity team for more than one year, they will only receive a letter and pin for their jacket for their first year on varsity, and then only a certificate for each year they are on varsity from then on.

**Playing Time:** *“It is amazing what can be accomplished when no one cares who gets the credit”*: One of the hardest jobs of a coach is determining playing time. All of our players work hard at improving their skills, trying to earn playing time to help the team win. Unfortunately, not every player has been blessed with the same skill/ability level. As players progress through each level of basketball, the competition improves, and some players find it hard to keep up. We do not guarantee playing time, but rather we believe that playing time should be earned through hard work, attitude, commitment to basketball, commitment to the team, understanding of system, and consistent effort. In order to keep consistency, we will generally use a rotation of 7-9 players/game. Each player needs to understand and accept their role. Players need to also understand that roles can and will change throughout the season. Some players will play the majority of the game. Some players will play mostly JV and be a vital role on the scout team in practice and have bench responsibilities during a game. All roles are crucial in a successful team and successful teams always have players who accept their roles for the betterment of the TEAM. Even though we do not guarantee playing time, here are three promises that we will make concerning players:

1. We will not quit on any player. It does not matter if a player plays every minute of the game, or no minutes in a game, we will not quit working to help that player improve.
2. We will be honest with each player in our assessments of their skills. The coaches will determine strengths and weaknesses of each player, and we will attempt to help the player improve weaknesses, while helping to sharpen strengths.
3. We will communicate as clearly as we can. It is our job to communicate roles and information to each player, and we will give our best effort to communicate to each player.

**Game Day Attire:** At school on game days, each player is expected to follow the attire that has been decided upon by the team for game days.

**Team Guidelines When Traveling:**

1. Follow all school policies.
2. Wear appropriate clothing for winter!
3. Be respectful and appropriate on any school vehicle.
4. Leave opposing locker rooms cleaner than we found them.
5. Be respectful to all fans, players, coaches, and staff from other schools.

**Physicals:** All girls that want to participate in basketball must have an updated physical form on file with the activities department in order to participate. Please email the activities office with questions.

**Injuries:** Athletes need to report any injuries to a coach or trainer immediately so they can help determine the severity of the injury. If an athlete needs to be taken to the hospital, 911 may be called.

**SouthSuburban Conference website:** <https://www.southsuburbanconference.org/public/genie/184/school/9/>

- The location for game schedule updates, choose “view schedules” on the right and select the team calendar.

**Prior Lake Basketball Page:**

<https://www.plhsactivities.org/page/show/1276147-girls-basketball-regular-season->