



# PRIOR LAKE BASKETBALL

## P.L.A.Y. Travel Basketball Program Handbook

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### **1. P.L.A.Y. Mission Statement**

Prior Lake Athletics for Youth (P.L.A.Y.) serves the Prior Lake-Savage Area School District to provide competitive, yet fun athletic opportunities for kids. Our priority is safety, skills development, and the teaching of life lessons through sports.

Our program promotes the importance of sportsmanship, teamwork, leadership, and integrity. We believe learning both success and failure through competition will benefit our future generations.

### **2. Basketball Board of Directors**

The P.L.A.Y. Basketball Board of Directors (Board) shall manage the affairs and business of the P.L.A.Y. Basketball Program (Program). For a current list of Board Members, see the P.L.A.Y. website at [www.playinfo.org/basketballboard](http://www.playinfo.org/basketballboard)

### **3. Player Eligibility**

#### **3.1 Eligibility Overview**

P.L.A.Y. Basketball is a member of the Minnesota Youth Basketball Alliance (MYBA) and therefore adheres to and enforces the Winter Basketball Team Composition & Player Eligibility Guidelines set forth by MYBA/MYAS.

<https://www.myas.org/myba-team-composition>

#### **3.2 Residence Requirements**

A player must live in the area served by, or attend school in, the Prior Lake-Savage Area School District 719 (PLS Area). This includes public, private and charter schools. Any other player may apply to the Board for permission to join a P.L.A.Y. basketball team by following the “Waiver Request” guidelines outlined in section 3.8 of this Handbook.

#### **3.3 Age and Grade Requirements**

Players must be enrolled in 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade and must play in their grade division. Players meeting the “Play Up” criteria outlined in section 3.9 of this Handbook may be eligible to play up one grade level with approval from the Board.

#### **3.4 Other Eligibility Rules**

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As required by Minnesota Youth Athletic Services (MYAS) guidelines and the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL), a player who plays for the high school varsity, junior varsity, 10<sup>th</sup> grade, or 9<sup>th</sup> grade team is ineligible to play for a P.L.A.Y team.

## **3.5 Moving Away During the Season**

A player who makes a traveling basketball team and moves out of the PLS Area or leaves a Prior Lake-Savage School mid-year may finish out the season with his or her team.

## **3.6 Multi-Household Families**

If a player lives in a multi-household family, the player may elect to participate in the traveling program applicable to either parent or guardian and address where they live. This may mean they are eligible to play in two different associations.

## **3.7 Registration Deadline**

A player may only join a team after the registration deadline with the permission of the Board.

## **3.8 Waiver Requests**

Non-PLS Area players may apply to the Board for permission to be evaluated for a P.L.A.Y. team if they first obtain a waiver from their home basketball association for which they would otherwise be eligible to play, and that waiver meets the MYAS waiver criteria. Waiver requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Board. Once an incoming waiver request to enter the Program has been approved by the Board that player's participation is continuous in the basketball program for subsequent years, and they are thereafter treated as a Prior Lake player unless there is a gap in enrollment. Players are still required to obtain the annual MYAS waiver policy form signed by the waiver Association(s). PLS Area youth who are cut at evaluations and without another P.L.A.Y. team for them to play on may request a waiver through the Board to play with another Association.

## **3.9 "Play Up" Policy**

Players in 5<sup>th</sup>- 7<sup>th</sup> who are interested in playing up one grade level must contact the Board expressing interest at least one week prior to tryouts. The Board will review on a case-by-case basis to determine if the player will be allowed to try out with the older grade. If approved, the player will have to meet the following conditions to be considered for playing up

- The player's tryout evaluation score must be one of the top 3 after all players are scored and evaluated in order to be considered.
- Board approval is based on the skill level of the player, the team needs of the older team, and the best fit for the player in the current year.
- Consideration of the previous year's coaching evaluations, and player code of conduct and commitment.
- Completion of the "Play Up" request form that can be obtained from the Board.

Players must apply to play up each year. If a player does not meet the criteria to play up, they will be placed

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on the appropriate team at their grade level. Players can only play up one grade level. Players in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> are not eligible.

This policy does not apply to players playing up in the high school basketball program. The high school coaching staff along with the player's families, not the Board, will determine if a player is eligible.

## 4. Level of Commitment

P.L.A.Y. has high expectations for its teams, coaches, and players. By registering and trying out, it means you accept the following:

- The season begins in October and tournaments end in March.
- Tournament and practice schedules will be provided as early in the season as possible. The expectation is that you will be able to eliminate scheduling conflicts if provided adequate time to make adjustments. The goal is to attend every practice and game. If a conflict does exist, it is the responsibility of the player or the player's parent or guardian to inform the coaching staff. Unexcused absences may lead to a player losing playing time. Habitual unexcused absences may lead to Board intervention. Further disciplinary action may be determined by the Board after exploration and interviews of the coaching staff and the player's parents.
- The practice schedule releases vary as gym space availability is dependent on the PLS Area. Practices are generally scheduled for two or three weeknights per week for an hour and a half. The program rents gym space from the PLS Area and shares this space with many other programs that include but are not limited to in-house basketball, cheer, community education, and other sports programs. Because of this, practice schedules are dynamic and vary by week. Some practices will end at 9:15 PM.
- The tournament schedule will be released early-mid August. There are two to four tournament weekend dates per month. Each grade will play in the following number of tournaments including the MYAS Grade State Basketball Tournament:
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade: 9 tournaments
  - 4<sup>th</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade: 11 tournaments
- Most tournaments are held on Saturday and Sunday, with multiple games per day. Some may include Friday night. Teams generally play at least three games in a tournament. Sunday morning games are likely.

### 4.1 Playing time

Every player is a contributing member of a team. Players are challenged in practice sessions and are given opportunities in game situations to display their basketball skills. All players get playing time, but some players may get more playing time than others. Playing time is determined by several things, including:

- Basketball skill & knowledge
- Foul trouble
- Match-ups

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- Attitude
- Attendance in practice and games
- Hustle at practice and games
- Work ethic

In the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grades, the basketball experience will be primarily focused on teaching and developing players' skills within the team context. For teams in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade through 5<sup>th</sup> grade, over the course of a tournament, the minimum expected playing time for every player is an average of 45% of minutes per game. This allows coaches more flexibility than having a minimum minutes restriction per game.

For grades 6<sup>th</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup>, increased emphasis will be placed on the players and team performing at a higher competitive level, and the minimum expected playing time for every player over the course of a tournament is an average of 40% of minutes per game. Modifications to playing time are allowed as a result of injury, foul trouble, practice, and game attendance issues, or other disciplinary reasons. Coaches should provide players and parents with communication prior to a game if playing time falls below the minimum for disciplinary reasons.

- Coaches should be clear in their communication with players and parents about expected playing time so that expectations can be managed. Please do not forget that coaches are volunteers – respect their decisions. If you have questions about your player, discuss them with your coach in private.
- We require you to follow Section 9.3, P.L.A.Y. Dispute Resolution Process and 24-Hour Rule, and arrange your conversations with the coach for at least one day after a game. The Board may also be consulted to provide guidance and help with any dispute between coaches, parents, or players.

## 4.2 Volunteer Requirements

P.L.A.Y. hosted tournaments are a significant source of revenue for the program and reduce the registration fees charged to each player. It is imperative that parents fulfill the volunteer requirements to keep registration fees down. Volunteer hours may change annually dependent on program needs. A volunteer deposit check of a predetermined amount will be communicated and collected from all at the time of tryouts.

Your player will not be placed on a team if your deposit has not been turned in. The deposit check is not cashed but remains with the Basketball Board until all volunteer opportunities have expired for that season. At that time, if your volunteer requirement has been fulfilled, the check will be shredded. If not, the check is cashed and the funds are absorbed into the basketball general fund. When indicated, volunteer opportunities will be created and posted via Signup Genius or DIBS.

Volunteer requirements for 2025 - 2026 are:

Each family is required to complete 6 total volunteer hours at P.L.A.Y. hosted tournaments.

- If you have more than one child in the Travel program, an additional 3 hours is required regardless of how many additional children
- Team Managers are credited 3 hours for their assistance as the team manager and only required to complete 3 hours

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- o Exception: If a Team Manager has more than one kid in the program they would need to complete 6 volunteer hours
- Coaches, assistant coaches, and PLAY Basketball Board members are exempt from volunteering.
- A \$500 check is required at the tryout registration. The check will only be cashed if volunteer requirements are not met
  - o Two checks are required if more than one child is in the travel program
- Parents can sign up to volunteer at either the Girls or Boys tournament regardless if they have a child playing or not

Prior Lake hosts a girls and boys tournament. We encourage you to sign up early, as slots will fill quickly.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to [basketballvolunteers@playinfo.org](mailto:basketballvolunteers@playinfo.org)

## 5. Registration

Registration is an online process. The registration link will be provided on the P.L.A.Y. website <https://www.playinfo.org/plbasketball> and typically opens in late July to early August. Registration will close one week prior to tryouts. Late registration will only be accepted with the permission of the Board.

## 6. Costs

### 6.1 Registration Fees

The registration fees for the 2025-2026 season are:

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade: \$550

4<sup>th</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade: \$575

### 6.2 Financial Assistance

If a family cannot afford the full registration fees, the family can apply for partial or full financial assistance. Please contact the VP of Basketball to apply at [vpbasketball@playinfo.org](mailto:vpbasketball@playinfo.org)

### 6.3 Annual Expenses

P.L.A.Y is a not for profit organization, below is list of what registration fees support within the Program

- Gym rental
- Insurance
- Tournament registration costs
- Storage fees
- Equipment
- Coaches and player apparel
- Website
- Financial assistance
- Referees
- Background checks for coaches

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- Evaluations
- Trainings and clinics
- MYBA Membership

## 6.4 Refunds

Travel teams depend on every player for a successful season. Teams have a limited number of players and if a player leaves during the season, another player may have been deprived of an opportunity to play. The Association also incurs expenses relating to each player that cannot be recovered if a player leaves. For these reasons, refunds will not be given for the player's registration after the team has started practicing. A partial refund for the difference between the travel and in-house registration fee will be provided to players who do not make a travel team. These players will automatically be registered to the in-house program.

## 6.5 Other Costs

### (a) Admission to Tournaments

Most traveling basketball Associations, including P.L.A.Y., do not charge an admission fee for spectators. Families may anticipate that some tournaments still charge admission fees and those costs are the responsibility of the families.

### (b) Uniforms

Travel players are required to purchase uniforms through our apparel vendor. You will keep the uniform and can wear it in future years if it still fits. Uniforms cost \$80-\$100. The Program operates on a two year cycle, refreshing uniforms every two years.

### (c) Travel Expenses

Teams typically participate in one "away" tournament. Most families choose to stay overnight for 1-2 nights. The cost of the hotel and any other travel related expenses would be the responsibility of the family. P.L.A.Y. does reserve blocks of rooms for the tournaments that provide families with discounted rates.

Note: For the 2025-26 season all girls teams will participate in an "away" overnight tournament as well as 7th and 8th grade boys.

## 7. Tryouts/Evaluations

### 7.1 Purpose

The purpose of evaluations is to assign players to teams based on an objective assessment of skills and abilities. It is impossible to accommodate individual parent requests for team assignments. Evaluations, therefore, rely on evaluators to assess players' skills and abilities as they perform drills and game play.

### 7.2 Attendance

Player participation in tryout evaluations is mandatory for a position on a traveling basketball team. In the event of an injury or absence that cannot be avoided, a parent or guardian must inform the Board prior to evaluations. The Board will review on a case-by-case basis. Should a player miss an evaluation, but be considered for a team, the Board will review prior evaluations, seasons, and coach's feedback from previous teams but there is no guarantee a player will make a team without attending tryouts.

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Tryout accommodations can be made for players who have a game conflict with another PLAY sport that is in season (Football, Volleyball or Cheer). Parents must contact a member of the board to arrange other options. Practices, club sports and sports that are not in regular season will not be accommodated.

## 7.3 Evaluators

- A minimum of 4 evaluators will be used in each grade level
- Evaluators are chosen by the Board and are selected based on their basketball knowledge and background, character, integrity and commitment to a fair process for all athletes.
- Evaluations will be conducted by a combination of the following and can change year to year based on Board decision:
  - PLHS High School Basketball Coaching staff
  - Select Board members
  - External independent evaluators
- Evaluators will never evaluate their own child or grade that their child is in

## 7.4 Evaluation Logistics

- Parents are not allowed in the gym during tryouts. Board members are not allowed in the gym when their child is participating in tryouts.
- Each grade level will have two evaluation sessions. The evaluation sessions will be no more than three hours in total. Certain players may be invited back for a third evaluation session to ensure an equitable amount of data is collected.
- Players should not wear any team or club clothing that could identify them to an evaluator. The goal is to make the evaluations as unbiased as possible.
  - Boys: Players will receive a reversible numbered jersey when they arrive for tryouts. It must be returned at the conclusion of the tryout process. If jerseys are not returned, parents will be contacted and charged accordingly.

Girls: Numbered stickers will be provided at check-in and must be worn throughout the try out process

### 7.4.1 Evaluation Logistics

- Players should arrive up to 15 minutes before their evaluation time. Parents may drop off their player(s), or they may wait outside the gym. Volunteers will be on hand to ensure players are supported and safe
- An evaluation jersey or sticker with an assigned number will be provided
- Players will need to consent to a profile photo next to a height chart to be used for identification purpose of the evaluators. These photos/images are not distributed or used for any additional purpose.
- A check must be provided (per section 4.2) in order to be considered for a team
- Signed copy (by both parent/guardian and athlete) of the last page of this Travel Handbook must be turned in

### 7.4.2 Evaluation Scoring Overview

- P.L.A.Y. uses an online scoring application, [TeamGenius](#), that allows for live scoring by the evaluators

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while observing each player.

- The players will have a two-day total score for creating a ranking. All evaluators' scores are final and not open to debate. The evaluators' final scores and rankings are reviewed only by the Evaluators, VP of Basketball, Travel Director, and Director of Basketball Operations. This group reviews player rankings, potential roster sizes, number of teams, team makeup, potential coaches and prior year coaching evaluations to determine team placement.
- Evaluation scores are not public and will not be shared after the evaluation process

## 7.4.3 Evaluation Criteria

- Team Genius is customized specifically for P.L.A.Y. Evaluations and customized weights are input. Players are evaluated on overall performance and not on individual drills during evaluations. A 1-10 scale is used to score the players on each criteria
- Players will be rated on a 1-10 scale in the following categories:
  - Ball skills
  - Shooting & Finishing
  - Game Play
  - Intangibles - Defense, rebounding, hustle, athleticism, basketball IQ
- Evaluators scores: 60% of total score (100% for 3rd and 4th grade)
- Prior Year Coach Ranking: 40% of total score (for incoming 5th through 8th grade only)
  - Players that do not have previous year coaching evaluations will be required to attend the 3rd day of evaluations. 100% of their evaluation scores will be based on evaluation scores.
  - Prior Year Coach Rankings include head and assistant coaches. Prior Year Coach Rankings by the player's parent as head or assistant coach will be omitted.
- The 1-10 scale is based on the following:
  - 1 – In House level
  - 2 – Below average C player
  - 3 – Average C player
  - 4 – Above average C player
  - 5 – Below average B player
  - 6 – Average B player
  - 7 – Above average B player
  - 8 – Below average A player
  - 9 – Average A player
  - 10 – Above average A player

## 8. Formation of teams

### 8.1 Team size

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The maximum number of players on a team is ten (10) unless the Board approves under a special circumstance. In general, team sizes are 8-10 players per team and are based on the number of players who register. The goal of this process is to place a competitive balance for all teams. The number of teams per grade level is based on the number of players with the ability to compete at the traveling level.

## 8.2 Number of Teams

The number of teams formed at each grade level will be based on the number of players who have the skills capable of playing travel level basketball. With skill-grading there will be an A team for players of higher skill, a B team(s) for intermediate players, and a C team(s) for remaining players. The number of teams for each grade level will not be determined until the tryout process has been completed.

## 8.3 Team names and level of play

The Program uses the following as our team names depending on the number of teams at each grade level.

- Blue
- Gold
- Navy
- Silver
- White

## 8.4 Pairings or Special Selection

When a family has multiple players at the same age level (ie. twins), the family has the option to elect to have both players placed on the same team. If electing to place both players on the same team, both players will receive the score of the lowest scoring of their two players at the end of the evaluation process. Both players will then be ranked at their grade level along with all other players according to that lowest score and be placed per previous team selection rules.

Alternatively, the family may opt to allow their players to be evaluated as individuals with the understanding that they could be placed on separate teams or that one player is cut while the other is placed on a team. The family's preference must be determined before evaluations.

## 8.5 Announcement of results

- The Board will communicate team results by posting teams online at [playinfo.org/travelbasketball](http://playinfo.org/travelbasketball)
- An announcement will also be posted on the P.L.A.Y. Basketball Facebook page once results are published
- Results will be posted no later than 7 days after the conclusion of the last evaluation date

## 9. Coaching

### 9.1 Coach Selection

The Board will select coaches for each team. Prospective coaches should complete the coaches registration, available at the P.L.A.Y. website, to the Board by the posted deadline. Each travel team will have a head coach, one to two assistant coaches and a team parent.

Interviews with coaching candidates will be conducted if there are multiple applicants for the head coaching position as the board sees fit. Previous coaching experience is considered in the selection process but does not guarantee a coaching position.

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Interviews will always be conducted for new coaches to the program and incoming 3rd and 4th grade coaches.

The Board makes coach selections based on:

- Previous coaching experience and previous coaching evaluation scores
- Knowledge of basketball
- Coaching philosophy
- Commitment to the mission of P.L.A.Y.
- Discussions with past players, coaches, or parents.

## 9.2 Background Checks

The Board conducts background checks on all head and assistant coaches. Coaches are also required to complete a concussion training course.

## 9.3 Coach Development

A variety of online resources exist for coach development, and P.L.A.Y. works to ensure coaches have development opportunities. Please see the coaches' resources portion of the [website](#) for more information. At the end of the season, the three objectives for each player in our Program are:

1. Did the player have fun?
2. Did the player learn and progress?
3. Does the player want to come back and play again?

## 9.4 Paid Coaches

Nonparent, paid coaches are used by P.L.A.Y. on occasion. The Board approves when it is appropriate to hire a paid coach for a specific team based on the need and availability of a qualified coach. The cost of the coach's salary is covered by P.L.A.Y. and not by the players on the team.

## 10. Code of Conduct

### 10.1 Codes of Conduct & Pledges

Every player, parent, and coach must read and review the Code of Conduct and Pledges. Forms are distributed via the online registration process and are also available on the P.L.A.Y. website linked below. Violations of the Code of Conduct may result in a warning, suspension from participation for a definite or indefinite time, removal from a coaching position, or removal from P.L.A.Y. Basketball.

[Code of Conduct](#)

[Coaches Pledge](#)

[Player's Pledge](#)

## [Parent's Pledge](#)

### **10.2 Code of Conduct Violations**

If there is an issue with the Code of Conduct or a Pledge that has been violated, it is the duty of those who have seen or been involved in the issue to submit a note to the Coach, Director, or VP of that sport to have an opportunity to gather information and properly rule. Parents and Coaches are the eyes and ears of P.L.A.Y. Being a volunteer organization means we all need to be involved. Don't rely on someone else to monitor situations.

In an email to the Coach and Director - please reference the following:

- Date, Sport, Team, Age or Grade, and Coach
- Report on the incident itself and what happened. You can be brief at this point and include the names of those involved and who else may have seen the incident. If an issue wanes for more than 48 hours, it will lose its effectiveness in reporting.

Depending on the severity of the incident you may be asked to submit a formal [P.L.A.Y Incident Report Form](#).

### **10.3 P.L.A.Y. Dispute Resolution Process and 24-Hour Rule**

As a not-for-profit organization whose services are primarily provided by volunteer efforts, P.L.A.Y. has established a [Dispute Resolution Process](#) to provide an efficient, orderly, and uniform method of resolving all covered disputes.

Policy: Each P.L.A.Y. player, coach, official, referee, parent, guardian, agent or other person, team, sponsor, or other group or organization ("Participant") agrees to abide by the Dispute Resolution Process as the exclusive remedy for all grievances by virtue of their membership, affiliation or participation at any time within P.L.A.Y. activities.

Definition of Dispute: A "dispute" is defined as any conflict, grievance, or disagreement between Participants, including any parents or guardians of a player and that player's coach or a league official or members of different P.L.A.Y. teams that may allege an ongoing violation of P.L.A.Y. Policies & Procedures and/or associated league rules and policies or any other continuing circumstance which requires resolution.

Disputes include but are not limited to, concerns about:

- Tryout Results and Team Placement
- Playing Time
- Player Positioning
- Coaching Strategy and Tactics
- Officials, Umpires, and Referees
- P.L.A.Y. League or Team Rules
- Code of Conduct Violations (Alleged or Confirmed)

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- Disciplinary Actions

Private disputes between participants that are not directly related to P.L.A.Y. activities are not subject to resolution through this [Dispute Resolution Process](#).

It should be understood that a violation of P.L.A.Y. policy by one person does not justify the violation of P.L.A.Y. policy by another person. (Example - If a head coach benches a player in violation of P.L.A.Y. participation rules, the parents would not be justified in using abusive language in demanding the coach rectify the situation.)

Details about the Dispute Resolution Process (24-Hour Rule), Penalties, and Significant Escalations can be found on the [P.L.A.Y. Dispute Resolution Process and 24-Hour Rule form](#).

