



Parent

Guide

Welcome to the Rookie Basketball Association!

The Rookie Basketball Association (RBA) is an fundamental development league for grades K-8. The RBA is not possible without volunteer coaches. Each year parents and community members give hundreds of hours of their time to share their knowledge and love of basketball with our kids. This guide includes policies and parent helps. Please take time to review its contents before the first game of the season.

THE SALVATION ARMY MISSION STATEMENT

The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian church. Its message is based on the Bible. Its ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination.

TODAY'S YOUTH – TOMORROW'S LEADERS

The Salvation Army Rookie Basketball Association, using sport as mission, aims to support families in developing youth in body, mind and spirit. The vision of RBA is to help youth build character, teamwork and leadership so they can succeed in education, careers, their community and beyond.

How we are different:

- Holistic child development
- Value proposition for all
- Motivated by the love of Jesus Christ

We understand the transformational ability of sport, both on and off the court, to influence a player's development holistically. We are constantly striving to improve in pursuit of excellence. We do this through quality programming, training and equipping coaches, intentional character development through the Marks of Excellence; founded on a safe, positive and fun environment.

Dear Parents,

The fall leaves fly for many reasons and indicate to us many other things that are quickly to come of which RBA Basketball is only one.

We are excited to hit the courts for another year. You are truly blessed to be a part of such a great basketball program. In fact just as your child has joined a team, you have joined together with us to create a wonderful atmosphere in which there will be great fun, teamwork and learning that God is good and desires for us to respond in love to each other.

My challenge this year is to help us help your children by respecting the leaders, coaches and other parents. You see, "The Marks of Excellence" are not just for the children, but they are for leaders, coaches, parents and all adults to model as well.

We count it joy to partner with all parents as we endeavor to enrich your children's lives through the vehicle of RBA Basketball.

Blessings!

Sincerely,

Captain Anthony Nordan

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MARKS OF EXCELLENCE

Love	devoted actions for the benefits of others Example: passing the ball to an open teammate closer to the basket
Peace	being at rest with myself and others Example: staying calm during an intense game
Goodness	doing the right thing Example: following the rules of the league and game
Gentleness	emotional control Example: calming down before a free throw
Patience	accepting difficult situations in order to grow stronger Example: respecting coach and referee decisions
Faithfulness	responsible for actions and accountable to others Example: listening and doing what my coach asks because my team is counting on me
Kindness	using words and actions to encourage others Example: giving a teammate a high five and saying, “great job!” after a good play or basket
Self Control	holding oneself in Example: remaining gracious in defeat and humble in victory
Joy	choosing to be pleasant regardless of outside circumstances Example: encouraging teammates regardless of the score

MORE THAN A GAME

The RBA takes the responsibility of developing youth basketball players very seriously. Physical training concepts from the Long Term Athlete Development Model & USA Basketball Youth Development have been incorporated in the Coach’s Guide. The Jr. NBA Instructional curriculum is the approved practice standard for RBA. Character training concepts from Joe Erhmann’s *InSideOut Coaching* and Jeff Duke’s *3Dimensial Coach* have been incorporated into coach’s training. Beginning fall of 2014 the Minnesota State High School League has incorporated these same character training concepts for all high school varsity coaches in all sports.

“Valuable life lessons can be learned from participation-lessons such as:

- *Learning to work with others toward a common goal;*
- *Finding the courage necessary to move outside of one’s comfort zone to learn something new;*
- *Overcoming failure; and*
- *Developing confidence and growing as a human being”*

From Why We Play by Jodi Redman, p. 34, *Minnesota State Prep Coach*, Minnesota State High School Coaches Association Fall 2014.

Each week players will be challenged on and off the court. Our goal is to coach the 3 dimensions of each athlete: body, mind, and heart. The mind and heart produce the attitude and effort a player brings to the court. These 3 dimensions are critical in the development of players and are the only things a player can control within the game. On the court we will be developing fundamental skills in three basic themes: offense, defense, and teamwork.

The “Marks of Excellence” are character qualities that will enhance players as athletes and people. The Marks play a role on the court as well as in everyday life and we encourage you to discuss them with your players and point out when they demonstrate them in practice and games.

With that in mind we would like coaches, players, and parents to take time to discuss what it looks like to engage with their body, their mind, and their heart, so that in sports, at home, in school, and in the community they can inspire, unite, bring hope, and change the world.

Thank you for entrusting the development of your player to us!



The Rookie Basketball Association is a fundamental development & recreational league that introduces basketball skills in a safe & fun environment. Emphasis is put on team play, sportsmanship, & character qualities. In March 2018, USA Basketball & the National Basketball Association (NBA) established rules and standards for youth basketball competitions to enhance the development & playing experience for youth athletes by helping them learn the fundamentals of the game & achieve greater on-court success. Resources, practice & game play will reflect these standards. Each coach is responsible for his/her conduct, as well as the conduct of the players, assistant coaches, & parents. It is the responsibility of each coach to ensure that the actions of the team, on & off the court, reflect the fundamental skill & character development goals of RBA. It is the standard and expectation that the following will be upheld at each RBA practice, game, and/or event regardless of location.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Before any individual will be approved to coach, assist, or help a team, they must complete a Volunteer Coach's Application, including submitting references, pass a background check, attending the Safe From Harm class, complete state required online youth coach concussion training, & be approved by the RBA director. All coaches must attend the coach's meeting before the season begins. If you are interested in joining the many volunteer coaches as either head coach, assistant coach or team parent or even *occasionally filling in*, you **MUST** complete the above requirements.

The RBA takes the role of coach very seriously. As parents, you are looking to your coach for basketball instruction, encouragement of effort, and development of character of your child. Area high school coaches are looking to them to instill the fundamentals of basketball in their future players.

Things you can do to help your coach succeed are:

- Make sure 2 or more approved adults (coaches/parents) are present during every practice. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**
- Introduce yourself to your coach and other parents. Let your coach know ahead of time if your player is going to miss practice or a game.
- Send a water bottle with your player to practice/games, be sure to label it with your child's name.
- **DO NOT** send your player unsupervised into any building the RBA uses for practice or games.
- **DO NOT** expect your player to leave the building to look for you in the parking lot. They will not be allowed to leave the gym until they have been signed out by an authorized adult.
- While parents are invited to watch practices, no one is allowed on the court during practice or games that is not registered to the scheduled team. Any spectators must sit or stand on the side of the court. Failure to follow this policy can result in a player being removed from the RBA.
- Keep food and trash out of the gyms.
- Valuables should not be brought to RBA programming. The Salvation Army is not responsible for lost or stolen items.
- Players are encouraged to work at home with 'homework', skill work that players can work on at home. 3-5 days working on skills will develop more improvement than one practice a week.
- Be accountable for your actions, you are responsible for any spectators including siblings brought to practice/games.
- Do not sit on the bench or allow siblings/friends/relatives to sit on the bench during games. Only registered team and approved coaches are allowed on the bench during games.
- Do not represent the team unless you have been approved by the RBA Director.
- Refrain from drug, tobacco, & alcohol possession and use inside and outside of all facilities the RBA uses.



- No weapons or look-a-like weapons are allowed at any of the facilities used by RBA.
- All forms of harassment and violence are prohibited.
- Proper procedure must be followed in the event of a fire alarm, evacuation according to evacuation maps or tornado warning, take cover as per indicated on posted maps.
- Disorderly conduct is prohibited and punishable by ejection from the facility and potentially the league. This includes inappropriate communication and disrespect for authority, RBA staff, facility staff, other teams, and/or spectators. The proper authorities will be notified. Law enforcement may be called to intervene.

COACH ABSENCES

In the event a coach cannot make it to a practice/game, the coach will be responsible to find an approved substitute. Each coach will be given a list of all the coaches in the league. Coaches must notify the RBA Director and their team of any practice/game changes &/or cancellations, or substitute coaches.

REGISTRATION—Registration information will be made available as soon as possible before each league. This information, including online registration, can be found on The Salvation Army RBA website. It will be sent out to all previous RBA families via email. The RBA aims to make the league affordable to all families. Scholarships are available to qualifying families. Families must complete & submit a scholarship application & proof of income &/or to be considered for a scholarship BEFORE registering. Scholarship applications will not be processed without proof of income. This process may take up to a week. Scholarship applications are available on The Salvation Army RBA website and at The Salvation Army office.

HEALTH— The RBA follows the guidelines of the Duluth Public School district. Go to <https://www.isd709.org/families/health-services> for the guidelines, including when to keep your child home.

TEAM PLACEMENT—Teams will have minimum of 6 players and a maximum of 10, when possible. Teams will be compiled at the discretion of the RBA Director. When placing players on teams determining factors will be as follows: Sibling placement, referred practice night, coach & teammate request, & school attending. To the extent feasible, the league will attempt to honor schedule & coach/teammate requests. Players may not switch teams without the approval of the RBA Director.

PRACTICE

Practice is designed to develop fundamental skills of the game and character. Scrimmaging should consume no more than 10 minutes of practice time. The relationships that form between coaches, players & parents develop at practice. It is important that coaches remember they are role models both on & off the court. It is also important that coaches & parents communicate effectively.

PRACTICE SCHEDULE—All practice times & locations will be assigned by the RBA Director. Teams are not to be in any practice gyms any time other than the times assigned to them as insurance must be provided. Changing of practice time & location must be approved by the RBA Director.

****Parents MUST sign their player in and out of practice in the assigned gym.** Parents ARE NOT to drop their players off at the front of the building. Players are not to arrive more than 10 minutes early to practice &/or loiter at the practice facility before or after practice. Please have your player use the restroom before practice under parent supervision.

CANCELLATIONS—In the event of school closures due to holidays or weather RBA practice/games will be cancelled. Coaches and parents will be notified via the League Apps Play app and email of any cancellations. These cancellations will also be posted on social media

EQUIPMENT—All coach and players must wear indoor gym or tennis shoes, NOT STREET SHOES, on all court playing surfaces used by RBA. Spectators and visitors should remain off of the playing surface. Coaches are responsible to use reasonable caution to see that snow, water and dirt are removed from shoes before admittance to the gym. All jewelry (earrings, rings watches, etc.), hats, &/or casts are not



allowed to be worn by players. RBA has a “Shoe Shelf”. It is gently used shoes donated by former RBA players. Contact the RBA office to receive or donate shoes.

FACILITIES—Use of gym facilities other than those necessary for practice, i.e. non-basketball equipment, etc., are forbidden. Make sure no fire exits are blocked. The only doors that should be used to enter the gymnasium are the doors from the hallways. Do not prop or keep open any doors during your scheduled time. If a door to the gym is locked please find facility staff to unlock the door. Any outside doors leading to the gym should not be used. This is a safety & security issue for the well being of the children. Any equipment found in the gym, athletic or otherwise, is not to be used, sat on or played on.

Food, drink, & gum are not permitted in the gymnasium. Only water is allowed in the gyms. **No running or ball playing is permitted outside of the gym.** No hanging on the padding on the walls. After each practice, all coaches & players must clean up around the bench any trash that has been left. Do not leave personal items unattended. Do not bring valuable to any facilities used by RBA. The Salvation Army is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Absolutely no drugs, tobacco, alcohol, weapons or look-a-like weapons are allowed on any properties the RBA uses for practice, games, and/or events. Parking is allowed in designated areas only.

UNSUPERVISED CHILDREN—No one other than players & parents/guardians are allowed in the practice facility during practice. Practice & practice facilities are not child care centers. Brothers, sisters, or friends of players are not to attend practices unless accompanied & supervised by an adult at all times & are not to be playing basketball. Children found unsupervised may result in the removal of their family from the league without refund.

GAME PLAY REGULATIONS BASIC

CLEAN UP—Please place all trash in trash cans. Teams & parents at the last game at The Salvation Army are responsible for helping put the chairs back in the dining areas. Any lost and found items will be left at the location they are found.

FOULS—Fouls are infractions of the rules that may or may not involve physical contact. Free throws will not be shot. K-5 grade team offended will receive possession of the ball.

-**PERSONAL FOUL**—A player cannot hold, block, push, charge, trip or impede the progress of an opponent by extending any part of his/her body nor use any rough tactics.

****The following acts will constitute a foul when committed against a ball-handler/dribbler:** 1) placing two hands on the player, 2) placing an extended arm bar on the player, 3) placing & keeping a hand on the player, & 4) contacting the player more than once with the same hand or alternating hands.

-**TECHNICAL FOUL**—In the opinion of the referee, based on behavior of the coach, player, or team for use of profanity, abusive behavior, or excessive rough play. As a result, the offending player will be dismissed from the game immediately. Fouls result in the ball being taken out on the side by the offended team. Offending player and a parent/guardian will be required to meet with RBA director before returning to practice and/or game participation.

MERCY RULE—The score will be frozen if the point spread reaches 20. Score will increase incrementally as the lower score increases.

REFEREES—Referees assume the responsibility of communicating right & wrong to players. They also act as an extension of the coach as they teach & encourage players while officiating.

REFUNDS—No refunds will be given, see refund policy waiver in your family profile.

SAFETY—A referee may stop the game at any time to investigate the condition of a player who may be hurt. If play is stopped by a teammate or referee to attend to an obvious injury, then the injured player must sit out at least until the next dead ball. Referees & coaches have access to first aid kits. All coaches & referees have been trained in injury and abuse responding and reporting.

Blood-borne Pathogens: Coaches & referees will remove a player from practice/game when blood is evident & flowing. The player will not be allowed to return to the game until the blood flow has stopped & existing blood cleaned up. Contaminated clothing must be replaced or removed before the player can



return to the game. The referee will allow a reasonable amount of time for these tasks to be completed. If a player is unable to meet these demands, he/she must be removed from the practice/game. Teams may continue the game with fewer players if needed.

SCOREBOARD—Score will NOT be kept in the K1 division. There are NO 3-point shots in K-5 grade RBA. If a team establishes a 20-point lead the scorer will stop keeping score for that team. Referees are responsible for finding responsible volunteers for running the score board.

SET UP—Teams scheduled for the first game at The Salvation Army are responsible to help take chairs from the dining area into the sidelines of the gym.

SPECTATORS—Spectators should be quick to cheer for either team following a made basket or good play. Profanity & unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated by any parent or spectator. Any spectator behaving in an inappropriate manner will be asked to leave. **No ball playing is allowed outside of the gym.** Spectators should remain in the gym. Parents please keep siblings, friends, or other spectators from roaming the halls, playing in the bathrooms or kitchens, standing on tables or any other inappropriate activity. No visitors, siblings or parents are allowed on team benches; players & approved coaches only. Food & drink are not allowed in the gyms, only water. Please discard all trash in trashcans.

SPORTSMANSHIP—Cheering is encouraged. Coaches work hard with the players to help them learn the sport & encouragement will go a long way. Coaches & referees should make every effort to ensure that games are safe & fair for players & spectators. The referee will remain the sole judge in deciding which plays are violations & fouls. Referees must control all games from any intentional rough play. Referees have different styles & experience. Even the best referees make mistakes. Spectators, coaches, & players must make allowances for this. The final outcome of games is rarely determined by a referee's actions or inactions. All teams will shake hands after each game as soon as the game is over. Coaches can meet with their teams off the court after shaking hands. Coaches will be responsible for any parent from their team that is unruly or abusive to refs or players. If a parent's behavior causes the referee to stop the game, that parent will be issued one warning. If the behavior does not change, that parent will be asked to leave & will need to meet with the RBA Director before attending another practice/game & may be subject to league ejection. If a player or coach receives a technical foul they will be dismissed from the game. If the foul occurs in the fourth quarter they will be ejected for their next game as well. A player or coach receiving two technical fouls in the same season will be ejected from the league with no refund.

UNIFORM—Official RBA jersey should be purchased at time of registration. T-shirts or tank tops must be worn under jerseys. Coaches will also receive an official coaches t-shirt that will be worn for each game to identify coaches on the sideline. All earrings, watches, bracelets or other jewelry that may cause an injury are to be removed.

UNSUPERVISED CHILDREN—Hallways, balconies, kitchens, bathrooms, & other areas near or attached to gyms used during games are not to be used for loitering. Children must be accompanied & supervised by an adult at all times & are not to be playing basketball unless registered on a RBA team & playing during their scheduled time. Children found unsupervised may result in the removal of their family from the league without refund.

VIOLATIONS—Referees will call & explain violations. When possible, referees will advise players of potential violations before the violation occurs.

K1 GRADE SPECIFIC

EQUIPMENT—All equipment will be provided. Children should wear gym shoes, their jersey, and a filled, labeled water bottle.

BALL SIZE—This division will use a mini, 6 inch, basketball. For home skills practice such as ball handling and shooting we recommend a mini ball as it is small and light enough for players to be most successful, build confidence and develop quicker.



HOOP HEIGHT— 8 feet

2-5TH GRADE SPECIFIC

BALL SIZE & BASKET HEIGHT—All players will use a 28.5 size basketball.

Baskets will be set at 9 feet for 4/5 grades, 8 feet for 2/3 grade

DEFENSE—All players are to play man to man defense. Defensive players must stay within arm's reach of the player they are guarding. K-3 grade players are **not** allowed to steal off the dribble. 4-5 grade players will be allowed to steal off the dribble at the coaches discretion after the first 1/3 of the season.

DOUBLE TEAMING—Double teaming is not allowed. However, help defense is strongly encouraged in the following instances:

- **Picks and Screens:** Defensive switching is allowed on offensive picks or screens. The non-screened defender can help his or her teammate by temporarily switching until the teammate recovers to defend their offensive player. This is commonly referred to as "help & recover". This prevents the offense from continually setting screens to gain advantage. It also causes the defense to be aware of & be able to defend screen situations.
- **Fast Breaks:** During any fast break (when the team that gains possession of the ball pushes it quickly into the opponent's end of the court, hoping to get a good shot off before the other team has a chance to set up on defense), another defensive player not assigned to the ball handler may help in order to slow or stop the fast break. Upon stopping the fast break, defenders should return to guarding their assigned players. This rule is meant to prevent the defenders from helplessly watching the offensive player score & not be able to help.
- **Lane Area:** If a defender is in the lane, & the player he or she is guarding is within arm's reach, the defender is allowed to provide help defense. Since many points are scored in the lane, this rule provides the defense more opportunity to properly defend this area without abandoning their assigned offensive opponent.

Zone defense & double teaming will be called illegal defense & will be a loss of possession.

FREE THROWS—K-3 grade players will not shoot free throws. 4/5 grade coaches can determine in February if they'd like to introduce free throws. Coaches are responsible for keeping track of player fouls. Players in marked lane spaces will be able to move into the lane when the ball is released by the free throw shooter.

FULL COURT PRESS—Full court press is not allowed.

GAME TIME—Teams will play four 8 minute quarters running time. A 5 minute warm up will begin at the top of the hour. Halftime will be 2 minutes. Running clock will be at the discretion of the referee in regard to the timeframe of the session. Clock will stop minimally for substitutions, this is NOT a time out for team discussions.

PLAYING TIME—Equal playing time for all players is the expectation for all divisions. Coaches should make every effort to play all players equally. If both teams combined have 8 or fewer players at any given game, they will play that game 4 on 4 instead of 5 on 5. Divisions may play small sided games based on USA basketball/NBA recommendations & RBA coach/staff discretion.

POSSESSION ARROW—Start of game possession will be determined by rock, paper, scissors. Team awarded possession will start with throw in at half court. Possession will alternate from that point on and will be the responsibility of the referee. Possession will be consistent through jump balls, beginning of quarters, and substitutions. Teams will switch ends at half time.

PRE-GAME—Five minutes of warm-up time is allotted for each team prior to start of game. Games should begin on time. Players, parents, & coaches must remain off the court until the previous game has ended. Teams having finished games must meet off the court to allow the next scheduled team space to warm up. Please be respectful of everyone's court time.

OFFENSE—In the 2/3 divisions the back court timeline & 5 second closely guarded rule are not applica-



ble. For 4/5 grade teams the back court timeline is 10 seconds and the closely guarded 5 second rule is only applied when the offensive player is holding the ball.

OVERTIME—One 2-minute period will be played in the event of overtime. Playing time guidelines do not apply.

STALLING—The offense must purposefully attack the defense in every situation—no stalling.

SUBSTITUTIONS—Substitutions will be every 5 minutes. These substitution breaks are not time outs & should be used to quickly change players.

TIME OUTS—Each coach will have two 60 second time outs during each half, one per extra period. Time outs can only be called by a coach on the sideline, should be called when play is stopped, and when your team has possession of the ball. Timeouts do not carry over to the next half or extra periods.

THREE SECOND RULE—The three second restriction in the lane should not be called. However, coaches & referees should encourage offensive movement in & out of the lane area. This helps teach the younger age groups to avoid this potential violation without being penalized.

6-8 GRADE SPECIFIC

MSHSL rules except as follows for in house teams. Teams playing games at the Superior Basketball Association will be notified of any changes or additions.

BACKCOURT VIOLATION—Players have 10 seconds to get the ball across half court.

BALL SIZE— 28.5

CLOCK STOPPAGE—The clock will stop on any dead ball (may go to running time when team is up by 20 or more or if games are running behind).

CLOSELY GUARDED—5 seconds will be called only when the offensive player is holding the ball.

DEFENSE—Only player-to-player defense throughout the competition.

FREE THROWS—Offense may have 3 players in the lane, including the shooter, defense may have 3. 10 seconds will be given per three throw. Distance from the basket should be 14 feet.

FOULS—Team fouls are kept. Seven team fouls equals the “bonus” - 10 equals “double bonus”. Referees will be instructed to be lenient. At this level, we do not want to call every single infraction, but rather teach rules and encourage game flow. **Flagrant and technical fouls:** two free throws and the ball awarded out of bounds. A player receiving their first technical or flagrant foul will sit out the remainder of the game PLUS one additional game. If a player receives a second technical or flagrant fouls they may be suspended indefinitely. There will be ZERO TOLERANCE for ANY coach who receives a technical foul.

GAME TIME—5 minute warm-up before each game, if time allows. Four 8-minute periods, one minute between periods.

LANE VIOLATIONS—Time in the lane will be limited to 5 seconds. Referees will “talk” to the players while starting their count to get them out of the lane before calling a violation.

OVERTIME—Overtime will be two minutes of stop time (running time if games are behind). Third OT will be “sudden death”, first team to score. All overtimes to start with a coin flip.

PLAYING TIME—Equal playing time in quarters 1-3. Coaches discretion in the 4th and any OT.

POSSESSION—Start of game possession will be determined by coin flip.

PRESSING—Player-to-player defense may be extended full court in the 4th period and OT. Leading team may not extend defense over half court when leading by 20 points or more.

SUBSTITUTIONS—5-8 grade substitutions will be on any dead ball.

TIMEOUTS—Each team will be allowed two 30-second timeouts per half. Timeouts do not carry over. One timeout per overtime.

DEFINITIONS

Player-to-player defense: Each player is responsible for guarding and moving with one offensive player. This requires the defensive player to move according to the offensive player’s movements with or without the ball. The defensive player must stay on the same side of the court as the offensive players, divid-



ed by the rim line.

Pressing Defense: Defensive guarding, either on or off the ball, within the backcourt.

Double Team/Crowding: Two or more defensive players guarding a single offensive player.

SPECIAL RBA EVENTS:

CHRISTMAS CITY OF THE NORTH PARADE

In November player and parents are invited to join RBA staff to walk in KBJR's Christmas City of the North Parade with The Salvation Army while dribbling a basketball or ringing a bell. Players will be given Dunkin' in Duluth shirts to wear over their jackets. Space is limited so sign up early.

CHRISTMAS BELL RINGING

Each year RBA families look to raise funds for The Salvation Army's year round social services through the annual Red Kettle campaign. Families or teams can sign up to ring the bell together in 2 hour blocks at various locations around Duluth. Watch for news of the RBA Bell Ringing day.

UMD HALF TIME GAMES

Coaches are expected to sign their team up to play during the half time of special UMD Men's and Women's basketball games.

UMD PRACTICES

RBA players will be invited to practice with the UMD Men's & Women's teams.

HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY HALF TIME GAMES

Coaches are encouraged to sign their team up to play during the half time of specific Denfeld & East girls and boys half time games.

HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY PRACTICE

High school varsity teams often invited RBA players to special practices with their teams. Emails will be sent as soon as information is available.

FOOD DRIVE

Each March the RBA holds a food drive to help stock The Salvation Army food shelf. All donated items will be matched. The team donating the most items will win a pizza party.

THE HUDDLE

Watch for your mail in the spring for ***The Huddle***, the RBA's newsletter. This newsletter will feature special events, important ways your family can help neighbors in need, and highlight opportunities for your player.



YOUTH DEVELOPMENT EXPECTATIONS

Understanding what to expect from kids at different ages
and how you can help them reach their potential.

The Long Term Athlete Development model is basically children learning skills and taking part in activities that match their stage of development. What this plan tells us is that early specialization, and early intense training in most sports just doesn't help the child develop to the best they could possibly be. The evidence is that too much early specialization actually prevents children from developing to their full potential. Some of the negative consequences include:

- Children don't have fun;
- They develop bad habits because of the over-emphasis on winning;
- Their skill development is poor;
- They don't reach their optimal performance level;
- Many burn out and drop out of sport.

I'm 4, 5 or 6 years old...

1. I'll have a tendency to keep the ball once I get control of it. I'll likely run in a straight line, even if I am going the wrong way, and may not stop at the field boundaries.
2. I can be easily distracted by things around the athletic event, such as a frog, butterflies, airplanes, or whatever takes my attention.
3. There will probably be a big difference in my attention span between ages 4 to 6. At age 4, I may be unable to understand games or keep up physically with the 6-year-olds. At age 6 I will be more likely to understand the game basics and control a ball with my hands or feet.
4. Generally I will enjoy the physical activity. I may be content to just stand in the field and occasionally reach out for the ball if it comes close to me.
5. Teamwork is a difficult concept for me to grasp...I generally will have a "me" or "mine" concept of the game. My awareness of teammates for passing will often be difficult for me to attain.
6. Catching a ball is difficult for me, but generally I am able to make a catch before it bounces twice.
7. I am able to kick a stationary ball, but have difficulty kicking a rolling ball.
8. I have very little concern with winning or losing. I may or may not appear to understand instructions from coaches. Remember, keep the instructions direct because I am unable to interpret vague or ambiguous statements.

Between ages 0-6 parents can help by...

1. Keep children active: Children this age shouldn't be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time except when they are sleeping.
2. Help them learn proper movement skills. Recognizing proper movement skills isn't always easy, but there are resources that can help.
3. Organize some physical activities—get a group of children and parents together and go to the park to let them explore the swings, slides, and monkey bars!
4. Let children explore their physical environment, but keep a watchful eye on them and keep the environment safe. Let them run, jump, climb, and swing—it's important for their development.
5. This is a great time to get children into introductory sport, basketball, gymnastics, and swimming—not to create elite athletes, but to provide wonderful learning opportunities in different environments.

I'm 7 or 8 years old...

1. I am beginning to understand the team-concept idea.
2. I am switching from the "me" and "mine" concept to realizing that teammates are present too.
3. Look, I've developed the ability to catch a gently thrown ball.



4. Most of the time I am able to dribble a ball continuously with my hands or feet without loss of control.
5. I am able to learn and understand the rules of the game.
6. From my point of view...playing the game is the major thing...winning is not a major concern.
7. I will accept instructions by my coaches but I need them to be direct and not ambiguous.
8. I may get overloaded by my parents/fans shouting instructions. Let the coaches coach...let them give me instructions.
9. I can become easily embarrassed by intense, negative criticism by fans/parents.

Between ages 6-8 parents can help by...

1. Arrange for your children to be physically active every day. Remember that several short bursts of activity are probably better at this stage than one long training session.
2. Encourage your children to take part in a wide range of sporting activities. Specializing too soon in a single sport is NOT good. Trying different sports helps children work on their agility, balance, coordination, and speed.
3. Make sure your children choose sports that focus on running, jumping, throwing, catching, and kicking.
4. Ask sports programs in your community to use trained coaches—they can help children develop the fundamental movement skills.
5. Urge your child's school to have frequent physical education classes—every day is best. Children benefit enormously when they're taught to do movement skills properly.
6. Talk to your children about the importance of having fun and enjoying participation. Focusing on results and overspecializing hurts rather than helps later sport performance.
7. Pay attention to the equipment used to improve strength. Children at this age should use medicine balls and their own body weight, not heavy weights or weight machines.

I'm 9 or 10 years old...

1. I am able to maintain a dribble with hands or feet.
2. I am able to control a ball using a variety of body parts, i.e., a thigh or head in soccer, or a bump volley in volleyball.
3. I am able to consistently hit a thrown ball with a bat (as in baseball) or racquet (as in tennis or ping pong ball).
4. Using my maturing motor skills, I am able to throw, catch, or kick.
5. I am able to use either hand or foot with competency.
6. I now have well established the team concept.
7. I may be easily embarrassed by intense, negative criticism and behaviors by adults. I now can accept the instructions of coaches. I may be able, to some degree, to interpret ambiguous directions, but receiving parental instruction at the same time as coaching instruction can confuse me.

I'm 11 or 12 years old...

1. I am able to throw or kick a ball with accuracy and for distance.
2. I am able to hand or foot dribble a ball while keeping an opponent from stealing it.
3. I am able to develop offensive and defensive tactics in team games.
4. I am able to combine individual physical skills in a competent manner, such as leaping, rolling, weight transfer, hand/foot dribble, running, and throwing, etc.
5. While being guarded by an opponent, I am able to throw and catch.
6. I can accept decisions of game officials, even if I disagree with the call.
7. I understand that skill improvement requires input of practice time and effort.
8. I accept the instruction from coaches. I may even make my own modifications of coaching directions.

Between ages 9-12 parents can help by...

1. Help children further develop fundamental movement skills and learn overall sports skills. Don't let



them specialize too much too soon—it can have a harmful effect on later skill development

2. Encourage your children to play at least three different sports they enjoy. Also encourage them to engage in unstructured play.
3. Make sure your children do the right kind of strength work. This includes doing activities that use their own body weight (sit-ups and push-ups, for example), working with medicine balls, and hopping and bouncing.
4. Encourage children to develop their endurance, for example, by playing games where they move continuously or by doing relay-type activities.
5. Be aware that training for speed is effective at this age. Children can develop speed through activities that focus on rapid, darting movements and on fast hand and foot movements. Rapid changes in direction are also great—think tag and dodging-type games.
6. Make your children get the right amount of competition. Children at this age enjoy competition, but they have to train too. The goal should be 70% of activity time training, 30% in actual competition and competition-specific training. In a team sport, this means 2-3 practices for every game.
7. If your child is in a team sport, make sure he or she gets a change to compete. This is not the time for coaches to play only the star players and leave less-developed players on the sidelines. Some of those slower developing children will some day reach the highest levels of performance in their sport.

For more information on LTAD: www.canadiansportforlife.ca or www.physical-literacy.ca

