

BASKETBALL

PARENT HANDBOOK

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<http://www.andoverathletic.org>

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Frequently Asked Questions

About the League:

Who's in charge of the league?

Boys Basketball Director, Brad Crandall, was appointed to the Board in 2011. He has family have participated in the association since 2008. Brad has been involved as a coach in many youth sports including: basketball, baseball, football and soccer.

Girls' Basketball Director, Larry Britton, has just been involved with AAA since 1997. A long-time youth sports coach in basketball and baseball, he was the girls' director from 1997 to 2002, and again from 2007 till now. He is also fully certified by the NYSCA and NYSAA.

You can reach the Directors by leaving a message on the AAA Hotline at 763-755-0805; calls are usually returned in less than 24 hours depending upon urgency. Please do not call the Directors' homes; with over 1000 children and 100 coaches between the two leagues, they need to be able to maintain some control over time management.

What is the league's philosophy?

The league exists to provide many things, but primarily focuses on three; fun, equal participation, and learning. The fun part should be self-explanatory. Equal participation refers to our belief that all children with a desire to play a sport should have the opportunity to do so and gain the benefits of athletics. This is why there are no tryouts for our teams, and why we attempt to keep teams as evenly matched as possible. It is also why our rules require that every player on a team plays an equal amount of time. The learning part comes in a variety of ways. First, there is learning the basic skills of basketball, and the commitment it takes to build those skills. Second, is learning teamwork and how to balance it with individual effort. Third, there is sportsmanship; learning how to perform within the constraints of rules, learning how to overcome adversity without losing focus and composure, learning how to win while maintaining respect for your opponent, learning to see losing as an opportunity to identify and take responsibility for personal improvement opportunities. These are obviously pretty lofty goals and are not necessarily taught directly, but they are the benefits we believe participation in our league should provide.

What about equal participation for children with various challenges?

Each year, teams consist of players of varying capability levels. This includes children with muscle and joint diseases, hearing deficiencies, learning disabilities, self-esteem problems, and a multitude of other challenges. While there are no defined limitations, parents should keep in mind that basketball is a contact sport, games do get competitive, coaches are just volunteering parents, and the Association is a volunteer-run non-profit organization with no government or school district funding. Parents must decide whether our program's structure best meets an individual child's needs. The cost of any special resources required for a child's participation in the league are the responsibility of the child's parent's.

Why doesn't anyone ever answer the Association's phone?

The 763-755-0805 number is a voice-mail system only. The Association has no offices or administrative employees. All Andover Athletic Association Directors and Coaches are volunteers interested in giving their time to the youth of Andover. Messages to the hotline are answered promptly based upon priority.

Are league directors paid?

No.

Can I directly address the Board of Directors?

Yes, guests are welcome at the Association monthly meetings which are held the 4th Tuesday of each month, except for June and July. To make arrangements to address the Board of Directors, contact the Association President www.andoverathletic.org.

How do you get on the Board?

Board members are elected by you. When you register your child for a sport, you become a voting member of the Association. Candidates simply volunteer to be considered at election time. Elections are held at the January Board meeting. Directors serve 2 year terms. Elections for President, Secretary, Softball Director, Girls Basketball Director, and one Member-At-Large occur in even years. Elections for Boys Basketball Director, Equipment Purchasing Director, Treasurer, and another Member-At-Large occur in odd years. Besides directorships, volunteers are often needed to assist the directors. Talk to the League Director for more information.

About Costs:

What exactly does the registration fee go towards?

See the Directors; they can show you the budget breakdown.

What should I do if I can't afford the registration fee?

Talk to the Director.

Is there a family discount?

Yes, the registration fee is waived starting with the 3rd child registered.

What's your refund policy?

A full refund is available up until the time shirt orders are placed (typically 3 - 4 weeks after the last registration). Once shirts are ordered, a refund will be issued minus \$10, unless the request is made due to the player making their High School team. Once practices begin, no refunds will be issued unless a replacement player is found.

About Team Selection:

How are teams determined?

Teams are determined by the Director. Players will be kept together from year to year to allow for teamwork continuity. Players will continue with their previous coach if that coach is still available. When a previous coach is no longer available, the player will be assigned to a new coach while trying to keep as many former team members together as possible. New players or those requesting not to be placed with their previous coach will be assigned to teams randomly while attempting to group players by neighborhood or school. There are no guarantees that your child will be on the same team as their friends or other children in your neighborhood.

Why isn't a skills evaluation and draft used?

The league used to use this approach, but the number of children participating has grown so much that it became too difficult to manage efficiently. Also, accusations were made that in the older age groups coaches instructed players they were interested in, to intentionally play "down" so that newer coaches would overlook them. While there was no substantiation of these accusations, the potential for abuse did exist.

Why are some teams always so good?

Teams that are consistently good from year to year typically exhibit some common characteristics. First, they usually have a roster of players that has stuck together every year resulting in excellent teamwork. Secondly, they usually have very good coaches.

What if I don't want my child to play for the coach they had last year?

There is a place to indicate this on the registration form. If you have specific concerns about a previous Coach, the Director would be interested in hearing them.

Can I request a specific coach? Can a coach request a specific player?

This is only allowed in the 1st through 3rd grades where scores and standings are not tracked.

What about requests for purposes of car-pooling easier?

Again, only in the 1st through 3rd grades.

Can it be arranged for multiple children from the same family to play on the same team?

Yes, as long as they are in the same level, siblings and cousins can be placed on the same team. Please make a note of this on the registration form and mention it to the person collecting registrations.

My child is small/big for their age, can they be moved to a team in another grade level?

No. Children within each grade level will cover a wide range of physical and emotional development resulting in some overlapping between grade levels. This is natural and not necessarily undesirable. Attempting to evaluate each player's development level would be difficult and beyond the capabilities of our resources.

Why are there Anoka teams playing in the league? How are their teams put together?

AAA has always allowed participants from other cities. Not every city has the number of young residents to support a stand-alone program. The Anoka Ramsey Athletic Association (ARAA) approached AAA after finding that other multi-city leagues were not providing the youth sports experience they desired, and found that AAA's philosophies fit their own. Their participation helps our programs by ensuring the number of teams needed to make for a good schedule where teams don't face each other over and over again. ARAA follows all of AAA's rules for team selection, although their lower number of participants sometimes means that everyone ends up on a single team. In all probability, even if they registered directly with AAA, we would likely group them onto the same team anyway based on address and school information.

About Coaches:

What do I do if I have concerns about my child's coach?

Contact the Director immediately.

I've heard that if there aren't enough coaches, refunds will be issued for some children. Is this true? If so, how do you determine who gets a refund?

This is true; this league runs on volunteerism. If there are an insufficient number of coaches or turn-out exceeds gym capacities, refunds will be issued using the following criteria in the order shown:

- non-Andover resident late registrants
- new non-Andover residents
- Andover resident late registrants
- new Andover residents
- random drawing if necessary.

What does it take to be a coach?

Coaching in this league does not require a high degree of knowledge of or experience with basketball. This is especially true in the younger age groups where the level of competition is less intense. 1st, 2nd, & 3rd Grade coaches are mainly focused on teaching basic game rules and basic skills; dribbling, passing, and shooting. 4th & 5th Grade coaches still spend a lot of time on basic skills along with increased focus on strategy. 6th & 7th Grade coaches begin to focus on advanced skills and basic strategy. Beyond this level, a certain level of skill is assumed and coaches begin teaching advanced strategy. Coaching does require a time commitment. Besides an hour per week each for games and practice, coaches can expect to spend 1 - 3 additional hours per week preparing practice and game plans.

Do coaches get any training?

The Athletic Association requires and pays for NYSCA training for each Head Coach. The NYSCA training consists of videos covering specific basketball coaching techniques as well as general topics including behavior, nutrition, injuries, and children's development. Assistant coaches are encouraged to attend also, but are not required to and must pay the \$20 fee themselves. Coaches are also required to attend a pre-season meeting where league rules and expectations are reviewed.

Are there any costs associated with being a coach?

There are no required costs. However, coaches may incur costs buying personal equipment such as whistles, clipboards, stopwatches, etc. The Association provides each team with 2 practice balls and a carrying bag.

About Schedules:

How long is the season?

The Girls' season runs from late September to mid-December. The Boys' season runs from early January to early April.

When will I hear from my child's coach?

Girls should hear from their coach by the end of September. Boys should hear from their coach in early January.

When are games and practices?

Regular season games are played on Saturday mornings and afternoons. Tournament games are played on weeknights, Saturdays, and Sunday afternoons. Practices are held once per week on weeknights. Specific information about when your child will practice will not be available until after registration is complete and teams have been determined. Practice schedules are determined based on information you provide at registration; you are allowed to indicate one night that your child will not be available for practice.

Do I need to be present at practices?

Parents' presence is preferred but not required. Keep in mind that coaches are not baby-sitters, and your child will probably appreciate your presence. Coaches often need helpers during practices.

Are practices mandatory?

You should make every effort to get your child to practices. This is where learning occurs; not at games. Attending practices is part of the commitment you and your child make in order to participate in the league. Coaches will make exceptions when other events inevitably conflict with practice time, but they are permitted to "bench" players who consistently fail to show up. You should always let your coach know ahead of time when your child will be unable to attend practice or a game.

About Referees:

Why are teenagers allowed to referee?

Our philosophy of this being a learning league applies to referees as well as players. Even certified referees had to start learning somewhere; we see the recreational leagues as the ideal location.

Why don't you use certified referees?

All of our referees are NYSOA certified, and many are MSHSL registered.

Do referees get any training?

Yes, referees attend a pre-season training session provided by an MSHSL-registered referee and League officials.

Why don't referees call all of the fouls being committed?

Actually, they call every one they observe. Contrary to most parents' belief, Basketball is a contact sport. Place 10 kids in a small area with a bouncing ball and there will be bumping and tangled limbs. Technically, fouls only occur when such actions directly interfere with a player's attempts to control the ball, or when such actions occur deliberately. Incidental contact will occur and is allowed.

What do you do when bad officiating causes a team to lose?

I rely on the teachings of my High School Football coach, Gerry Narkiewicz, who told us, "if we were in a position to have the referees' calls lose the game for us, we were never in a position to win it in the first place." Besides, lessons learned in a losing endeavor are usually more valuable and plentiful than those learned while winning.

National Association of Youth Sports (NAYS) Pledges

Parents' Pledge

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

- I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials at every game, practice, or other youth sports event.
- I will place the emotional and physical well being of my child ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will insist that my child play in a safe and healthy environment.
- I will support coaches and officials working with my child, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
- I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- I will remember that the game is for youth not for adults.
- I will do my very best to make youth sports fun for my child.
- I will ask my child to treat other players, coaches, fans and officials with respect regardless of race, sex, creed, or ability.
- I promise to help my child enjoy the youth sports experience by doing whatever I can, such as being a respectable fan, assisting with coaching, or providing transportation.
- I will read the NAYS National Standards for Youth Sports and do what I can to help all youth sports organizations implement and enforce them.

Players' Pledge

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

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

Coaches' Pledge

I hereby pledge to live up to my certification as a NYSCA Coach by following the NYSCA Coaches' Code of Ethics:

- I will place the emotional and physical well being of my players ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development for the same age group.
- I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for my players.
- I will promise to review and practice basic first aid principles needed to treat injuries of my players.
- I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all my players.
- I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players.
- I will provide a sports environment for my team that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and I will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- I will be knowledgeable in the rules of each sport that I coach, and I will teach these rules to my players.
- I will use those coaching techniques appropriate for all of the skills that I teach.
- I will remember that I am a youth sports coach, and that the game is for children and not adults.

Administrators' Pledge

I hereby pledge to provide positive support to all youth sports programs in my community, to administer youth sports programs with professionalism and in the best interests of the children involved by following the Youth Sports Administrators' Code of Ethics:










- I will run youth sports programs for the children involved, not the adults.
- I will ensure that I am knowledgeable in the area of youth sports administration.
- I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for all participants.
- I will provide support for coaches, officials and parents to provide a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
- I will require all coaches and officials to be trained in the responsibilities of being a volunteer within the organization and that they uphold the NYSCA/NYSOA Codes of Ethics.
- I will implement and enforce the National Standards For Youth Sports.
- I promise to keep informed about current issues involving youth sports programs.

Officials' Pledge

I hereby pledge to live up to my certification as a NYSOA Official by following the NYSOA Officials Code of Ethics.

- I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support of all players, coaches, fellow officials and league administrators at all times.
- I will ensure that I am knowledgeable of the rules of each sport I officiate, and apply those rules fairly to all participants, teams and coaches.
- I will not allow personal friendships and associations to influence my decisions during a contest.
- I will refrain from the use of tobacco and alcohol products when in the youth sports environment.
- I will remember that youth sports provide an opportunity for children to learn and have fun and I will place their safety above all else.

Poem: They're Only Kids

							
	<h3>They're Only Kids!</h3> <p>Please don't curse the kids down there, they are mine, you see; They're only just kids, you know, and they mean a lot to me.</p> <p>I did not raise my children, sports fan, for you to call them names; They may not be super stars, but then it's just a game.</p> <p>Please don't curse the kids down there, they do the best they can; They never try to lose a game, they're kids and you should understand.</p> <p>The game belongs to them, you see, and you are just a guest; They don't need a fan like you, they need the very best.</p> <p>So if you have nothing nice to say, please leave the kids alone; And if you can't enjoy the game, why don't you just stay home?</p> <p>So please don't curse those kids down there, each one's their parents' delight; And win, or lose, or tie, you see, to us they're all alright!!</p>						