

Mini-Hoopsters
Co-Ed Basketball Program

“Let’s Get Them Started”

By

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Abstract

The City of La Grande currently has an after school sports program for basketball. This program is coordinated and organized through the La Grande School District available for the 4th and 5th graders currently enrolled for the corresponding school year. Unlike Little League for softball and baseball and the soccer program managed by the La Grande Parks and Receptions Department, there is no program available for 1st through 3rd graders in the sports of basketball. The major obstacle in establishing a youth basketball program for the 1st through 3rd graders and for any youth program historically has been the availability of gym space and knowledgeable coaches.

Benefits of Mini-Hoopsters

Having a successful High School basketball program begins by introducing a positive, fun and exciting basketball experience at a young age. This program will give the head coaches for each program the chance to teach the proper skill base and technique that every young basketball player needs. The underlying purpose is to show the kids a fun and exciting atmosphere, every child can benefit from their participation, regardless of the skill level. According to Payne and Isaacs (2008), the number one reason children discontinue playing a sport is that it is not “fun” anymore. The overall goal is that each child has a positive learning experience. With the introduction of basketball at this level, the children will learn about being part of a team and the sportsmanship that comes along with it. The hope is that this experience will carry on through the remainder of their school years and every child will want to be a part of the La Grande High School Basketball program. By having a short two week program culminating in a tournament, the 1st through 3rd grade participants will hopefully gain a love for the game and a desire to continue.

Gym Availability:

In gathering information concerning the availability of gym space, contact was made with Susie Nice, Operations Specialist in charge of scheduling gym usage. There was conversation about pricing of gym usage (personal communication, January 20, 2010).

If the La Grande Youth Basketball Association were to undertake this project, there would be a charge for gym usage. This would inflate the pricing of participation in the program, and directly affect the cost of the program for the participants. If the High

School Basketball teams organize the program with help from the LGYBA there is no charge for the gym usage during the week.

Once school begins in September, there is minimal gym availability, volleyball for the 4th and 5th graders this past year started September 22, 2009 and ran until October 22, 2009. The best time for the program to be initiated would be the last week of October and the first week of November.

Gyms: Option #1: The gyms at Central, Greenwood and Island City would be available from 2:30pm until 5:00pm. These times would allow for Tuesday and Thursday after school practices at the three elementary schools. This would be for the last week in October and the first week in November culminating in a tournament on the first weekend in November on Saturday for all participants at the La Grande Middle School.

Gyms: Option #2: The gym at the Middle School would be available on the weekends. If this route is taken, it would be best to use the three Saturdays in the middle of October. The third weekend would have the tournament for all participants. The last weekend in October is traditionally Halloween and considering the age of the participants, this would not be a good idea.

Both of these ideas will be contingent upon the scheduling of Volleyball games by the High School and Middle School Athletic Directors.

Coaching staff:

As stated earlier one of the largest problems with developing an after school program is the coaching. For this proposal the head coaches for the boys and girls basketball programs at the La Grande High School will need to find volunteer

participants from their programs to coach for two weeks prior to the Saturday tourney. It will be more advantageous to have larger numbers of coaches to provide the one on one the kids will need. This will help them retain the skills learned. Following is a list of those skills (ASEP) that should be taught in these sessions.

Layups – the kids should know how to do a layup with either hand, jump off the proper foot and shoot with the appropriate hand.

Footwork – triple threat position, pivoting on the correct foot and what it actually means. Jump stops, being square to the basket. No traveling.

Shooting Form – Use of small balls

Ball Handling – dribbling with the left and right hands equally.

Passes – chest, bounce and overhead pass,

Offense – at this age a structured offense would be inappropriate. But cut moves, screens would be of good use. That is basically a motion offense anyway.

Defense – defensive slides and stay between your man and the ball, always stop the ball if it is in front of you.

When ready play 2 on 2 & 3 on 3 games.

Each head coach may have his own combination of drills and determining which drills to use would have to be established before the program took place so that everyone is on the same page.

The advantage of this program is two-fold for the High School kids. This plan is a fundraiser for the girls and boys basketball programs at the High School while also teaching them some valuable interpersonal skills with the youth of our community.

Coaching: Option #1 -- If the High School teams volunteer their time to coach, there would need to be at least one parent volunteer per gym. The other draw back to this option has to do with release times from school. The elementary kids are released at

2:30pm and the high school kids are released at 3:05pm. In speaking with John Tolan, (coordinator of the after school programs for the 4th and 5th graders and principal at Island City Elementary School), he shared that if the kids head home after school it is hard to get them back to the school to participate (personal communication, February 3, 2010).

The LGYBA would be willing to organize supervision at the gyms for the 30 to 40 minute gap.

Coaching: Option #2 -- If the program is held at the La Grande Middle School on Saturdays, supervision of the High School volunteers would be done by the head coaches.

Saturday Tournament:

The tournament on Saturday would be run in a round robin fashion using the following rules established to facilitate the on-going learning of the youth athletes throughout the practices and the Saturday tournament. The rules implemented are the same rules used during the 4th and 5th grade after school programs by the La Grande School District with a few minor changes. I believe this will keep the program consistent and will be an easy transition for the participants when they move up a level to 4th and 5th grades.

Rules:

1. Each player must play half of every game, with one exception: a player that is absent from practices during the two week period is entitled to play at least one full quarter.
2. Three seconds in the key is enforced, 1st offense results in continued play and full explanation by referee. Second offense results in ball out of bounds to other team.
3. Each team member will wear a corresponding colored wrist band to an opponent. This way they will remember who they are guarding.

4. Team and personal fouls will not be kept. Fouls are determined at the referee's discretion.
5. No full court press or zone defense. **Only** man-to-man defense. Help defense is acceptable.
6. The ball must be brought into the forecourt within 10 seconds. Once a player or team gains control in the backcourt or by an inbound pass; the offensive team must be allowed to move the ball past the centerline. The player with the ball cannot be defended until the player has both feet in the forecourt. *Do not create a wall at half-court so the offensive team cannot get it past half-court.*
7. Substitute during dead ball situations ONLY.
8. Two free throws when shooting fouls. NO one-and-one free throws
9. The 1st thru 3rd Grade will use a Regulation Women's ball
10. Numbers of Players:
Effort will be made to try to make teams of equal size and ability in order to provide for more ball time for each participant. *All players must play at least half (1/2) of each game.*
11. The Duration of Play:
Teams change baskets and possession at half time. There shall be a (5) minute break between halves. The length of games will be as follows:
Division Duration
1st – 3rd (4) (10) ten-minute quarters
12. There will be no scorekeeping.
13. Player's Equipment:
Referees will inspect players and have them remove watches and jewelry.
Non-marking shoes are required. Clothing should be loose.

Advertising:

Getting the word out for the program will be accomplished by setting flyers and registrations out at the three elementary schools for two weeks prior to the beginning of the practices. This way there should be enough time to determine how many kids are

interested and how many volunteers will be needed. A notice should also be put in the briefly section of the La Grande Observer and possible PSA's on the radio stations in La Grande.

Registration Fee:

The fee for participating in the program will be set at \$15.00, contingent upon agreement between the coaches. This amount is consistent with what the school district charges for the after school programs.

Conclusion:

This proposal will be submitted to both head coaches at the La Grande High School. Aaron Mills is the head coach for the boys basketball team and Doug Girdner is the head coach for the girls basketball team. The boys are currently engaged in playoffs for advancement to the state tournament and the girls just ended their season. Because they were in the middle of their respective seasons, they have not been approached about the proposal at this time.

The recommendation to the coaches is to use the three weekend scenario with the kids as the coaches supervised by Coach Mills and Coach Girdner.

References

Payne, Gegrory V., Isaacs, Larry D. (2008) Human Motor Development: A Lifespan Approach. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill

La Grande School District #1 After School Sports Program, 2010

American Sport Education Program, (2007) Coaching Youth Basketball, 4th Edition