2027 AAU SPRING BASKETBALL SEASON
PROGRAM HANDBOOK

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Overview: **LTB offers AAU travel teams for boys in grades 3rd-12th that compete in local tournaments around northeast Ohio. LTB Eastside will offer teams for boys in grades 4th-12th in 2027. We will also have a 4-12th grade girls Westside program. This handbook will provide the details and information regarding your son or daughter participating on one of our travel teams. Our teams focus on individual basketball development, basketball knowledge, and team skills. The goals are to develop our players, have them learn more about the game, play against good and challenging competition, and most importantly, have fun playing the game. We also focus on using basketball as a vehicle to help student-athletes become better people.**

History: **LTB travel teams started in 2018 by lead director and coach Luke Toth. In 2018, LTB started with 3 travel teams. In 2019, LTB grew to 11 travel teams in one season. In 2020, LTB grew to 22 travel teams, right before the Covid-19 pandemic. The program had 23 teams in the spring of 2022. In 2023, we had 31 teams, and in 2024 our program consisted of 34 teams overall. In 2025, LTB Club consisted of 375 players making up 40 teams during the 2025 Spring Season. Last season, our club had over 300 players and 32 teams during the 2026 campaign.**

Purpose: **Our main purpose is to develop the knowledge and skills of young players. We teach kids how to practice, and show them effective ways to become better players. We introduce new drills and workouts players can use to develop their game. One of our main goals is to get every player ready for high school basketball. Many players are unaware of the time and dedication that is needed to not only make a high school team, but to be a good player at the high school level. In the process of preparing our players for high school, our main purpose is to develop players and have them learn about the game. Winning is important, but it is not the main goal of our basketball club. Our main goal is to develop players and teach the game of basketball.**

Mentorship: **We also provide our players with mentorship. We try our best to help every player improve in some way. Whether that be on the court, or in the classroom. We are really big on teaching players life lessons that they can take with them, and apply them to multiple aspects of their life. The main aspects we focus on are…**
Work Ethic
Consistency
Competitiveness



Practices: **Each team will have ONE (1) mandatory team practice each week. Practices will be 60 minutes. Practices will take place at the following facilities…**

WESTSIDE LOCATIONS:
Lutheran West High School - Rocky River
Messiah Lutheran - Fairview Park
Valley Forge High School - Parma
St. Anthony of Padua - Parma
Urban Community School - Ohio City
More facilities to be added…

EASTSIDE LOCATIONS:
Lakeland Community College - Mentor
NDCL - Chardon
Mentor Recreation Center - Mentor

Each team will have ONE (1) mandatory practice each week. Everything we do at LTB has a greater purpose. Practicing more than three times per week at the youth level will not only wear down players, but discourages character education values such as good sportsmanship, and focuses on a "winning over everything" philosophy, rather than an individual players' strengths and opportunity for improvement. If players are over-practicing each week, in addition to tournaments, there is a greater chance of players getting worn out, over-pressured, and tired of basketball. When players are more developed at the high school level, and want to focus further on basketball skills, that is the age when they should start intensive practice. At the youth level, players are still in the development stage, and need a good balance. Players will be able to attend player development skill sessions during the spring. Please see information below on our player development sessions.



LUTHERAN WEST HIGH SCHOOL
(ONE OF MANY GREAT PARTNER FACILITIES WITHIN OUR PROGRAM)

2027 COACHING STAFF
(FULL BIOS WILL BE AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE)

RETURNING COACHES



LUKE TOTH



BRIAN KLYPCHAK



DEMARIO FITZGERALD



GI GI JOHNSON



JAMES COOPER



RODDRICK GREEN



RYAN CUTRIGHT



RUDY GRAHAM

USA BASKETBALL CERTIFIED

All coaches will follow our coaching guidelines and philosophies. Bios and information will be updated on our website. All coaches in the LTB program this spring season, and moving forward, will be USA Basketball Certified. Being certified by USA Basketball will enable our coaches to establish credibility by joining the national standard in coach education and safety. USA Basketball is the national governing body for the sport in the United States. LTB coaches will benefit from annual resources, coaching and safety education, and a background screening.



Coaching Staff: **LTB offers a diverse coaching staff, made up of former high school and college players. Our staff also consists of coaches with many years of experience at all different levels. Most of our coaches are former players, and have high school or college playing experience. Our coaches are very knowledgeable, and they all come with plenty of on-court experience that they will share with our players to prepare them for their future basketball careers. All of our coaches at LTB meet the following requirements:**

- **Minimum of two years prior coaching experience**
- **Current background check**
- **USA Basketball Coaching License**
- **LTB Player Development Trained**

Overall, our coaches love working with kids and helping them become better players. Their biographies can be found on our website. Full biographies of new coaches will be added over time.

Playing Time: **This season, all teams will have eight to ten players. This will allow for coaches to establish a good playing rotation. The LTB program believes that no player should be sitting on the bench for an entire game or tournament. We stress to all our coaches, our program is all about development. Yes we want to win, but winning is not the main goal of our program. Each kid needs a fair chance at developing his or her game. This season, we are implementing our "Player Development Playing Time Philosophy". Players will be guaranteed 50% of playing time at each game, if they meet the following criteria:**

- **Attends the ONE (1) mandatory team practice throughout the season.**
- **Attends player development skill sessions throughout the season.**
- **Displays a good attitude in practices and games.**
- **Shows effort and hustle in games and practices.**
- **Displays good sportsmanship and respect during all games and practices.**

If players meet these criteria, they will be guaranteed 50% of playing time throughout the season in order to truly develop. If players do not meet some of these criteria, the coach has the ability to limit playing time until the player improves on the aspect the coach is asking from them. We want to challenge our players and help them grow as players and as people. We do not want to reward players who do not work for playing time, regardless of their skill level. Our philosophy on playing time will be discussed more at our annual parent meeting in February. If a parent or player wants to discuss their playing time situation, parents are to contact the coach or director via email or cell phone to set up a time to discuss. Parents and players will follow the 24 hour rule in regards to playing time, which is listed below in parent and player expectations.

Tournaments: **Our program will only have players participate in the following tournaments:**

- **3rd Grade - 5th Grade (FIVE (5) Tournaments)**
- **6th Grade - High School (SIX (6) Tournaments)**

The players need a healthy combination of practices and games for proper development. We are strongly against exhausting players in excessive tournaments. We like to space out tournaments as much as possible to hone in on where players are struggling, and work with them weekly in practice to help them develop their skills and game. Our program takes an individualized approach, focusing on overall player development. Each team will have the tournaments they are participating in listed on their roster sheet. Our teams will compete in tournaments hosted by different organizations, such as Varsity Athletic Club (VAC), Ohio Basketball, All-In Basketball, NorthCoast Showtime, HoopTech, and TNBA.



Player Development Skill Sessions: **The best feature of our program is our player development skill sessions. Over the course of any of our seasons, we will have skill sessions listed for all grades throughout each week. These skill sessions will focus on fundamental skill work. Players have the opportunity and ability to attend as many of these sessions throughout the season as they want. We will offer multiple sessions per week for players in all grades. These sessions will be offered in addition to the one team practice each week. Offering more player development sessions gives our players and families more flexibility to come to practices and skill sessions that fit their schedules. Skill sessions will be offered in all of our different facilities throughout northeast Ohio. All sessions will be run and directed by LTB coaches, who are all USA Basketball Certified and LTB Player Development Trained.**





Plays: **The biggest misunderstanding in youth basketball is in running plays. All teams younger than 7th grade will NOT LEARN PLAYS. We teach our kids how to play, and not how to run a play, or run a pattern. We teach players skills and concepts that will benefit them in the long run. MEMORIZING A PLAY HAS ZERO LONG TERM BENEFIT. Some coaches spend the entirety of practices going over plays at the youth level- this is a huge disservice for these young players. The plays they are being taught have no long term benefit for their development as a player. At the older levels, we will incorporate a few plays. However, all levels engaging in plays will do so at a minimum level, as the main purpose of our program is to develop players.**

How To Play: **Teaching players how to play is what youth basketball is all about. This includes teaching players proper spacing, how to cut, how to get past a defender, how to defend, how to run the lanes, etc. Our program teaches players universal skills and concepts that can be applied to any team or program they play on in the future. We will also teach players concepts and skills to beat a press, and handle pressure. Some teams, based on numbers of players and skill level, will be taught how to press. Pressing players at the youth level teaches aggressiveness.**

Pressure / Handling the Press: **This is the one aspect of the game many youth players, even high school players, struggle with. Handling pressure is a process. Many teams we play will be very quick and athletic, and will press almost the entire game. We as coaches will teach our players how to handle pressure… but it takes time and it is a process. We have a few "press breaker" plays, but the biggest thing we teach is universal press-breaker concepts, that will work for any press-breaker. Here are the most important aspects of handling the press:**

- **Being strong with the ball**
- **Using effective rip throughs**
- **Making strong, solid passes**
- **Having a reverse man, a middle man, and a sideline man**
- **Being confident - do not panic**
- **Reading the press - when to dribble and when to press**

Winning: **We want to win, but winning is not the main goal of our program. Too many coaches, parents, and programs put a heavy emphasis on winning at the youth level. Longterm, winning a 5th grade championship doesn't mean a whole lot. We want our teams to win; we want the kids to have fun; we want them to make friendships and memories; but the more important 'win' for our program is to help their development, help them become better players and people, and prepare them for their futures. The best feeling is when a parent or player reaches out to our program and informs us that our coaches helped their child improve on or off the court. Knowing we helped that player on their journey is what it is all about. We will have advanced and intermediate teams. All of our teams will follow our philosophy on winning. Winning is not the main goal, rather an objective during the season.**



Health & Safety Guidelines: **The health and safety of our players and families is the utmost importance of our program. We ask that players stay home if they are feeling sick in any way. If any player or family is dealing with health issues, please reach out to a director.**

The LTB Difference: **We use the game of basketball as a vehicle to help reach kids and young adolescents. We focus on development. Our main purpose is to help players grow, on and off the court.**

Tournament Mobile Apps: **To get game and schedule updates, location of venues, directions, and updated changes, we encourage all families to download the mobile apps for all tournaments. This season, all players and parents will have to look up their game date, time, and location. We will not send out individual schedules. Each tournament app will be listed in the weekly emails.**

Dropping Players Off**: Parents, please make sure that a coach is in the gym when you drop your child off. Players are not allowed to be in the gymnasiums we use without one of our coaches. This is a liability issue. Please don't drop your child off at practice without knowing if the coach is in the gym or not. Spectators are allowed at all practices and skill sessions.**

Playing For Other Teams: **Players may play for other AAU teams in the spring. All we ask is that this is communicated to the coaching staff. If your child is also playing for another program during the spring, please let us know.**

LeagueApps Registration: **In the Fall of 2024, our program moved to a new registration system, LeagueApps. LeagueApps is a technology platform that helps with registration, payments, and team management for sports programs. All registrations and payments will now take place on the LeagueApps platform.**



LTB CLUB EXPECTATIONS





Parent Expectations: **We thank all parents for their support and their flexibility. Please see below a few parent expectations:**

- **Communicate with us anytime your child will miss a game or tournament.**
- **Support the team and coaching staff.**
- **Cheer for the team and players in a positive manner.**
- **Respect all coaches, officials, and opponents.**
- **Set up a scheduled time with the coaching staff, if needed, to discuss any questions or concerns.**
- **24 Hour Rule - Please reach out to coaches if you have a question or issue 24 hours after the incident / problem has occurred.**

Coach Expectations:

- **Encourage growth of each player on the team as a basketball player and as an individual.**
- **Teach each player principles and lessons they will take with them throughout life.**
    - ***i.e. Work ethic, being on time, being a good teammate, showing sportsmanship and respect, etc.***
- **Ensure a positive basketball experience for each team.**
- **Serve as a positive role model for the young players you oversee.**
- **Come on time and prepared to each game and practice.**
- **Follow the USA Basketball guidelines and LTB Player Development Standard.**

Player Expectations:

- **Be coachable and willing to learn.**
- **Be a good teammate, and play with respect and discipline.**
- **Give effort, hustle, and energy on the court.**
- **Support your team while on the bench.**
- **Display good sportsmanship at all times.**
- **Wear a reversible LTB jersey to all practices and skill sessions.**
- **Be ready and prepared before each practice and game.**
- **Respect your coaches, the officials, and all spectators.**

Roster / Team Selection: **This season, rosters and teams will not be created / selected until two weeks of practices and skill sessions have occurred. This will allow all coaches to observe and evaluate all players skills and abilities for a two week period. All players will be placed on a team. Players will be assigned to certain teams based on skill level, experience, etc. We want all families to buy-in to the LTB philosophies and trust the coaching staff on which team their child should be placed on.**

Refund Policy: **The travel basketball world consists of paying for many expenses of the season upfront, before the season begins. Because of this, a portion of player fees are expensed immediately. Expenses include gym rental, uniform fees, league fees, coaching fees, etc. No refunds will be given for any reason. If a player gets hurt, the player will receive credit for a future LTB program / season.**

LTB UNIFORM POLICY
(New for 2027)



Uniforms/ Practice Jerseys: **For the 2027 Spring Season, each player will receive the following as part of their registration fees:**

- **LTB Game Shorts**
- **LTB Practice Jersey**

If players need a LTB Game Jersey, they are to order those separate at registration. In 2026, we ordered brand new uniforms, and most returning players will wear that jersey again this season. Players will have the option to order a LTB shooting shirt or a LTB warm-up hoodie. Shooting shirts and hoodies are not included in the fee and need to be ordered separately. Players are not required to order a shooting shirt or hoodie, but they are not permitted to wear any other hoodie or shirt for warm-ups.

Warm-Ups: **Players are not allowed to wear any other gear besides LTB apparel during warm-ups. For example, players are not allowed to wear Cavs gear or gear from another AAU club. All players have a few options for warm-up apparel:**
LTB Hoodie
LTB Shooting Shirt
LTB Uniform



LTB UNIFORM POLICY (CONTD.)

Game Uniform Policy

- **LTB Game Jersey (2027)**
- **LTB Club Shorts (2027)**
- **White or Black Shirt Underneath**
    - ***(players can choose not to wear an undershirt if desired)***
- ***New for 2027:* All players will be required to bring their LTB practice jersey with them in their bag to all games.**



Practice Uniform Policy

- **LTB Practice Jersey OR LTB Game Jersey (2025 or 2026)**
- **LTB Club Shorts (2025 or 2026)**
- **White or Black Shirt Underneath**
    - ***(players can choose not to wear an undershirt if desired)***



Warm-Ups Policy

- **LTB Game Jersey**
- **LTB Hoodie**
- **LTB Shirt**



LTB UNIFORMS: SPRING 2027

**** NEW: For the 2026 Spring Season, all players in the program received our brand new game uniforms. The uniforms included a reversible jersey and black shorts. For the 2027 Season, we imagine most returning players will wear their game jersey from last season. The LTB Game Jersey will not be included in the 2027 registration fee. If players need to order a new jersey, they need to do so at registration. Players will receive a practice jersey and LTB shorts with their 2027 registration fees.**



2027 Spring Uniforms