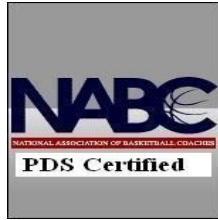




2025 HLB SPRING TEAMS SEASON

Parent Information – Program Outline & Core Details

3rd/4th Grade ACADEMY



www.higherlevelbb.com

PROGRAM PURPOSE

Offer a structured, progressive, competitive outlet for players to not only improve their individual skills, but also gain both general game experience & more specific situational experience to advance their performance AND, **most importantly, PREPARE them for the next level/grade** they are progressing to for 2025-26.

IMPORTANT: Our philosophy for 3RD/4TH Grade “Academy” approach is to continue a re-building effort after the covid years by focusing on core Club-style basketball, building a long term foundation for players of **MULTIPLE** skill levels/abilities and interest (Similar to the club style development programs overseas/in Europe and some US club sports.) See Parent info video for more on that.

Areas of emphasis

- Skill Set evaluation and development/progression
- **MAJOR** emphasis on developing/fostering players passion for playing AND working at the game
- Situational development in player execution and confidence levels
- Competitive outlets that early on, we have a good deal of control over, progressing later in spring to levels that challenge players/teams in other external competitive environments
- Developing/enhancing basic levels of **MENTAL TOUGHNESS** development for each player

PAST RESULTS/SUCCESS of HLB Team Program

Since 2008, HLB has had 109 high school players move on to play at the college level (at 43 different schools in 19 states), garnering over \$9,820,000 in both athletic scholarships/financial aid. In that same time frame, 229 former middle/grade school players have gone on to play high school in KY, IN, OH & FL.

PROGRAM consists of:

PRACTICES:

- 2/week on average: one will be a 1.5 hour practice during the week, the other likely a practice of 1-1.25 hours on their In-House game days, prior to their games. Highly structured practices covering: Individual Skill work; Situational breakdown work (example-how to use/guard ball screens, etc); and team concepts (man-man O, press, etc)
- Some extra “bonus” practices early in season, typically on weekends (+ annual “Mini-Camp”- see below)

COMPETITION

- IN-HOUSE LEAGUE: Will divide all players into teams of 6-8 for league play over 4-6 weeks that we setup/run and control ourselves.
- During those in-house league games, coaches will begin to identify what players are ready, prepared, able to compete in other local, exterior events (tournaments or leagues) and in later spring, we will divide those players by grade (at 3rd level, at 4th level) into teams to enter into some of those events. For those not ready for that competition yet, we will work on individual games and further player development to advance them to those levels.

COACHING STAFF

- Coach Raque and Coach Melton will oversee the overall program, supported by coaches Branch & Dunn
- We will assign 2-3 additional PRIMARY academy coaches who serve as the most “hands-on” coaches
- ALL Coaches that are hired are screened and supervised by HLB Sr Staff & ALL coaches will be mentored/”trained”

***Mini-Camp:** #1 highlight of spring: weekend of team practices/team bonding time to develop/improve team chemistry. PLEASE refer to parent video for more info on mini-camp.

SCHEDULE OVERVIEW: organizing/getting started

- > Informal Evaluations: 2/24-3/1 NO FORMAL TRYOUTS NEEDED for 3rd/4th Academy
- > Roster formation and Parent spring “Kickoff” meeting: 3/2 or 3/3
- > “Pre-Season”/Begin In-House league games: end of March/early April thru early to mid May (NOTHING spring break)
- > External team Competition: early May to Memorial day weekend/1st weekend of June depending on team

PROGRAM FINANCIALS

SPRING TEAM FEES per player

Player Team fees cover:

All Coaches Stipends	All Practice gyms/space
In-House league fees to cover officials, gyms, game workers	Team Liability Insurance
All player Skill Sessions: Space & Instructors	Team Coordinator
All Administration, coaches training & certification	Practice gear/uniforms for each player
Team T-shirt and basketball for each player	Mini-camp weekend practice gym rentals

NOTE: The ONLY expense not covered in Primary team fees will be any tournament/event entry fees in May for teams/players that have external competitions. Those are divided among the participants for those events and collected the weeks of those events.

2024 SPRING Estimated Cost Ranges: *Below is the estimated cost range for this Academy approach per player. Please note that the specific, final amount will depend on the total numbers of participants from 3rd and 4th grades and how many teams we need to form. Typically, costs will fall somewhere right around the middle of this range.

2024 Academy for 3rd/4th grades estimated fees: \$350-\$390 per player

****COST COMPARISON with other similar programs/teams in the region:**

We research, analyze and compare our annual spring team fees with multiple other organizations/AAU's in this region each year to see where our expenses land compared to those programs and what they offer. For 2024, this is what we've found:

- High end programs (including true AAU events, some travel): \$350-\$500 or more per player
- Mid level programs (including some external play and/or in house events): \$275-\$400/player
- Low level programs (offering only volunteer coaches, local or rec league play, 1 practice per week): \$200-\$320 per player

MANAGING TEAM FEES: Options for how to handle payments/team fees

1) Payment plans/Discounts

Full, upfront payments will have a 5-10% discount built in
HLB also offers 2 and 3 payment plans to spread out expenses over 2 or 3 months of spring
Multiple payment method options (venmo, cashapp, credit/debit card, check)

2) FUNDRAISING:

We have a couple of tried & true fundraisers we can get families into each year via Kentuckiana Fundraising, a local Louisville sports fundraising company. Those are: Peel to Save Discount Cards & *Money Dolly*. We will explain and being offering these at each team's Kickoff meeting after rosters are set.

- Peeler discount cards. Sign up for as many cards as you wish – no \$ needed upfront. Any unsold can be returned. Earn \$6 per card sold, \$4 goes back to Kentuckiana Fundraising. Typical amount raised varies between \$50 - \$200 or more per player
- **MoneyDolly:** Works via app - friends, family, etc can order products they like to help players raise funds OR they can simply do a donation for player. Funds raised are credited to each player and a running tally is kept that shows sales/donations for each participant. Delivery of any ordered products is direct - parents/players do NOT deliver items. Wildly successful for players that participated in 2023, ranging from \$200-\$800 raised/player. We show 1 of funds raised reports in parent video.

Special \$ Situations: For those with special financial circumstances/needs, we will do everything we can to work with you to make the program fit for you. If in a special circumstance, please contact coach Raque (rob.raque@higherlevelbb.com) directly & he will get with Bob Smith, our financial director and tech consultant, to see what options we can provide

NOTES:

HLB SENIOR STAFF

Rob Raque

President/Lead Instructor

President and Lead Instructor for Louisville-based Higher Level Basketball. Having founded HLB in Fall 2003, Coach Raque is now in his 43rd year of coaching, including six at the college level. Career highlights include:

2003-Present President and Lead Instructor for Higher Level Basketball

2000 – 2001 Coordinator of Athletics & Recreation; Men’s Club Basketball Coach - Jefferson Community College.

1999 - 2000 Men’s Assistant Coach, University of Southern Indiana, Evansville, for Head Coach Bruce Pearl (currently at Auburn), where he helped USI to # 1 national ranking in NCAA Division II.

1994 - 1998 Assistant to Bob Valvano at Bellarmine University, Louisville - key player in turning program around – helped lead Knights into top-10 in Great Lakes Region & Top 25 Dunkel power rating.

Has worked with such players as Matt Gladieux (Bellarmine, Coastal Carolina & the CBA), Barry Bowman (former Sunbelt Conference freshman of year @ SW La, England Pro league all star), Cameron Mills (Kentucky), LaRon Moore (NKU All American), Chris Dowe (Bellarmine All-American) & others who’ve gone on to play professionally/overseas.

Holds a B.B.A. in Business Management and an M.S. in Sport Management. Raque is a PDS (Professional Development Series) certified member of the NABC (National Association of Basketball Coaches – 28 yrs) and was presented with an NABC Merit Award for coaching service in 2010.

Drew Melton

Senior Instructor; Team Coach; Player Development Coordinator

Drew has been with HLB 8+ years. Currently is the most senior instructor and helps coordinate player development. He has coached at *every* level of the teams program and has helped countless players move on to play high school from middle school and college from high school.

During his time at HLB, he has also spent 5 years at Trinity high school as an assistant and the current Head Freshman coach. He has also spent 6 years as the 6th grade boys coach at Nativity Academy where he currently serves as the AD.

He also worked on the scout team for the University of Louisville’s women’s basketball team for 4 years. Prior to that he was a 4 year varsity player at Frederick Fraize High School

Mike Branch

Associate Instructor; Team Coach

Coach Branch is now in his 5th year at HLB. He has been a head coach 4 years in the high school program and an instructor for that same 4 years. He began his coaching career at HLB as coach Raque’s top assistant for Boys 10th grade, then 11th grade teams.

He also is the current JV coach at Eastern high school and works at Shoot360, specializing in improving player shooting technique

Alex Dunn

Associate Instructor; Team Coach

Alex is nearing the end of his 4th year with HLB. He currently is an associate instructor, working with all grades but specializing in grade and middle school player development. He has also been an assistant and head coach in our team program – starting as a 7th grade assistant 4+ years ago, progressing to a 10th/11th grade head coach last spring. Alex works with multiple coaches in our teams program.

Alex also just completed his 1st season as 8th grade head coach at Nativity Academy in Louisville

Prior to HLB, he was part of the Scout team for UofL Men’s and Women’s Basketball programs from 2016 – 2019. He played at Tates Creek HS in Lexington as part of 10+ years as a player in competitive basketball