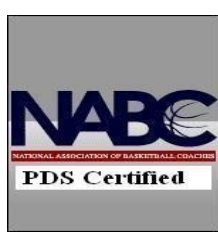




2025 HLB SPRING TEAMS SEASON

Parent Information – Program Outline & Core Details
Middle/Grade School Boys Grades 5-8



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 & specific situational experience to advance their performance AND, **most importantly, PREPARE them for the next level** they are progressing to and for **next year's school tryouts/teams**.

Areas of emphasis

- Skill Set development/progression
- Situational development in player execution and building performance confidence levels
- Competitive outlets that test/push players under appropriate ability/grade levels
- *Developing/enhancing **MENTAL TOUGHNESS** for each player*
- Fostering the player's passion for the game

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. Highly structured. Goal: get teams practicing at least 1 grade higher than current grade
- Some extra “bonus” practices early in season, typically on weekends (+ annual “Mini-Camp”- see below)
- Practice schedule typically 2 weeknights but some teams use 1 weeknight and 1 weekend time (Scheduling *does* have *some* flexibility. Availability info/feedback requested from parents during informal evaluations)

COMPETITION

- Teams usually play 1 spring league locally and then 2-4 tournaments based on ability/grade level & player availability **OR** some teams may opt to play local tournaments only based on player availability (Typical Leagues: Midamerica Fri or Sun; Jtown Sat/Sun league; Hoosier Hills)
- Tourney schedule/decisions are made after the 1st week of regular practice/Mini-Camp

COACHING STAFF

- Coaches are screened, hired, trained & mentored by HLB Sr Staff & required to have experience at middle/grade school levels
- Each grade level is staffed by experienced coaches

Player Group Skill Sessions:

- Four 1-hour large group skill sessions with our senior instructors. Multiple date/time options starting in May.

***MINI-CAMP:** #1 highlight of spring: Weekend of team practices/team bonding time to develop/improve team chemistry. Usually held out of town at a college campus. **HUGELY IMPORTANT WEEKEND for all teams!!** Discussed in Parent video

Related Notes:

TEAM LEVELS: where numbers/ability levels dictate for each grade, we may have multiple ability level teams: Advanced; Intermediate/School Level; Development Level

ROSTER size: 8-10 players per team. Occasionally, we *may* combine grades (typically only at 5th/6th or 3rd/4th) depending on how ability levels matchup. We also consider options for players playing UP 1 grade level if benefits both player and team

Organizing/getting started

- Informal Evaluations (explained in parent video) 2/22-2/28; Tryouts 3/1-3/5
- Roster Selection/formation at end of tryouts
- Team “kickoff” meeting for parents/players/coaches of each team: 1-2 days after roster posts
- **“Pre-Season”:** From team business meetings through Spring Break
- **Competitive period:** End of Spring break-Memorial day weekend/1st weekend of June (depending on team/league, etc)

PROGRAM FINANCIALS

SPRING TEAM FEES are per player

Player Team fees cover:

Head & Assistant Coach Stipends	All Practice gyms/space rentals
Team League Entry Fee*	Team Liability Insurance
Group Skill Sessions space rental & Instructors	Team Coordinator
All Administration, coaches training & certification	Team T-shirts

NOT INCLUDED:

- Tournament entry fees for any tourneys entered are not included in main team fees. Because we won't know who exactly is participating in which tourney prior, we do NOT pre-charge for tourneys like other organizations. For any of those the team enters, we divide up the entry fee by # of players playing in that tournament & that is collected the week of the tournament.
- **UNIFORMS:** Each parent/family will purchase their own uniform. We will provide instructions for how to do so from the team store at the team kickoff meetings after tryouts (see parent video for more details)

2025 SPRING Primary Team Fees/Estimated cost Ranges: Specific amounts OR Cost ranges are below. For 7th & 8th, these are estimated ranges that will be specified once the rosters are set & we know exact #'s, competition, etc. Most years for any ranges listed, it will be around the midpoint of below ranges. For 2025, team fees are \$10-\$15 total more than in 2024.

8th Grade: \$405-\$430 per player	7th Grade: \$400-\$420/player
6th Grades: \$395/player	5th Grade: \$390/player

****COST COMPARISON with other Teams/Programs in the region:**

We research, analyze & compare our spring team fees with multiple other organizations/AAU's in the region each year to see how are costs compare and what they are offering. Thus far for Spring 2025, here are some comparisons:

- High end teams – at least some travel: On average \$370-\$625. Around 25 hrs of practice time. Some with hired/trained coaches, some not. Most also require uniform purchase.
- Moderate level teams – all local in leagues or tourneys. Average \$300-\$450. One direct competitor of ours offers 8 individual dates that are practices/games combined dates, so 12.5 hours total for \$300. By comparison our spring teams practice 30-40 hrs + have mini camp

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

1) Payment plans/Discounts

Full, upfront payments will have a built in 5-10% discount

HLB also offers 2 and 3 payment plans to spread out expenses over 2 or 3 months of spring

2) FUNDRAISING:

We work with Kentuckiana Fundraising, a local sports fundraising company, in offering 2 tried and true fundraisers for anyone wishing to do an individual fundraiser. Those are: Peel to Save Discount Cards & *Money Dolly*. We have a separate fundraising video and will cover these in detail at each team's Kickoff meeting after rosters are set. At a glance:

- 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 App:** Friends, family, etc can order products they like to help players raise funds OR can simply do donations. Funds raised are credited to each player & a running tally is kept showing sales/donations. Delivery of any orders is direct – so NO delivering items. Very successful for players that participated in 2023-2024, ranging from \$200-\$800 raised/player.

Assistance: Please refer to the Parent Video for info on a new NPO, Higher Level Athletics. They will be initiating a few fundraisers and will be working on donations and sponsorships and *may* have some limited assistance available

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 Gladioux (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