

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT GREAT FALLS SELECT BASKETBALL

### WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THE PROGRAM?

First, we want our program's 8<sup>th</sup>-grade graduates to be fully prepared for successful high school basketball careers. From 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades, Select players will be progressively mastering the fundamentals of competitive team basketball. Compared to other youth basketball programs, GFSB is a competitive, high-commitment program (versus a recreational, low-commitment program) and is more focused on player development than focused on winning games. We are confident that playing the right way will lead to success in competition.

Second (and perhaps more importantly) we want to set the standard in Northern Virginia for supporting well-rounded, long-term athletic development. Even for players for whom basketball is not their primary sport, a commitment to GFSB should make them better competitors, better teammates, and better leaders in whatever athletic career they pursue.

Beyond the tactical skills and X's and O's of the game, we want to be teaching the life lessons that competitive team sports can offer. We think of the season not just as a schedule of practices and games, but as a six-month course in how to succeed in a team environment, how to overcome adversity, and how to set and achieve worthwhile goals.

Finally, we put a great deal of emphasis on being a low-drama program, and work hard to prevent the parent/coach/player politics, agendas, and conflicts that all too often make youth athletics a bad experience. We put the players first and try to make sure that the role of the coach and the role of the parent don't get confused.

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE?

If your son or daughter will be in 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade this October, and if you are a resident of zip codes 22066, 20170, 20194, or 22182, they are eligible to participate in GFSB. The program can also accommodate a limited number of players from outside those zip codes, and we may have opportunities for highly competitive 4<sup>th</sup> graders as well. Unfortunately, we cannot accept players resident in Loudon County due to league restrictions.

### WHAT LEVEL OF COMMITMENT IS REQUIRED?

Tryouts begin on October 1 and players will be practicing at least twice a week for 90 minutes per practice as soon as teams are selected. Practices take place at local elementary and middle schools, starting no earlier than 500 PM and ending no later than 930 PM. Younger teams usually get earlier practices, but not always. Games begin after Thanksgiving and from that point teams will be playing once and sometimes twice a week through February. The league schedules breaks for Thanksgiving and

for Christmas holidays, but many teams will be participating in holiday tournaments when the schools are closed.

Realistically, Select players need to make GFSB their first-priority extracurricular commitment. When players miss practices and games – for whatever reason – it hurts the team. We don't have a rule that says "if you miss three practices, you're off the team." But if a rule like that would make you think twice about the commitment required, this may not be the right program for your player.

#### HOW MUCH TRAVEL IS INVOLVED?

Games get played at middle schools (primarily) throughout Fairfax County. In practice, most games will be played at gyms within 10 miles of the Great Falls area, but some games may be scheduled at the southern edges of the county in communities such as Mount Vernon and Alexandria. We encourage players to carpool whenever they can, but it is still a fair amount of driving.

Most games are on weekends and usually the various age groups will find that they're playing mostly on Saturdays or mostly on Sundays. But that is only a general rule, especially if winter weather causes snow days and game cancellations – "make-up" games will wind up being during the week.

#### HOW MUCH DOES THE PROGRAM COST?

First, all players trying out for Select basketball must register with Great Falls Basketball and pay a registration fee of \$150. In addition to that fee, each team will require funding for uniforms, equipment, holiday tournaments, etc., and some teams will be employing professional coaches and/or trainers at additional expense. Generally team expenses per player wind up being in the \$500-1000 range (usually at the lower end of that range) for the entire season, but each coach will provide budget requirements BEFORE tryouts begin, so that the financial commitment is explicit and up front.

#### WHO COACHES THE TEAMS?

All of our coaches have years of basketball coaching experience and, specifically, experience with coaching competitive youth basketball teams. Some of our coaches are parents of players and some are not; some are professional coaches. Most coaches have some involvement with their teams and players during the off-season as well via AAU and/or summer league competition.

#### WHEN ARE TRYOUTS? HOW MANY PLAYERS WILL BE SELECTED?

Tryouts begin September 29 and most teams will hold two or three tryout sessions between Sep 29 and Oct 15. We plan to have at least one team in 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grades for boys and girls, and each team will select 8-10 players. These teams will compete in Divisions 1, 2, or 3 of the Fairfax County Youth Basketball League (FCYBL).

When we have enough competitive players in a tryout for a specific age group, we may decide to run a second team. That team would usually compete in a lower Division of the FCYBL.