



## VABA BRUINS AAU BASKETBALL



### **Background & Philosophy**

The Virginia Basketball Academy's mission is to "build character and shape lives through the game of basketball." VABA seeks to carry out its mission in a number of ways, including through basketball teams that practice and compete in AAU tournaments throughout the calendar year. For those **Bruins** teams, grades 5+, the VABA Bruins program is structured in a way that allows athletes to participate in the VDBL that practice and compete during the winter basketball season.

VABA BRUINS basketball is founded on the philosophy that, through a team setting, the greatest opportunities exist to carry out the mission of skill and character development.

### **Mascot Name (Why Bruins?)**

The Bruins name originates with [John Wooden](#), the long-time UCLA Bruins coach and the inspiration for VABA and VABA's philosophy of character development. Coach Wooden is widely regarded as the most successful coach in history, not only because of the record 10 National Championships his teams won, but most importantly because of his emphasis on moral and physical condition, doing one's best and team spirit. The VABA Bruins serve to carry on the legacy of his name by representing his team's mascot and the standards of excellence they will forever epitomize.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the VABA Bruins is to provide a basketball experience to committed student-athletes that will foster a year-round period of individual and team development.

#### **The VABA Bruins:**

- (1) Are grounded in the core mission of VABA**
- (2) Create continuity in a consistent team environment**
- (3) Avoid direct conflicts with winter teams (VDBL)**
- (4) Strive to provide a variety of team-types to accommodate different schedules**
- (5) Allow families to plan calendars substantially in advance**
- (6) Continue to foster relationships amongst athletes and families from different parts of the area**

### **Coaches selection**

In order to properly carry out the VABA Mission, the most critical element is the quality, competence, knowledge and experience of the coaches. A VABA coach is a mentor. All VABA Bruins coaches must be approved by VABA's Executive Director after having completed VABA's professionally-designed Coaches Training Core Curriculum. This includes fulfilling all classroom and on-court training sessions as well as undergoing coach evaluations in VABA's winter developmental league. We believe this is the **only AAU basketball program in this area that not only requires such comprehensive standards for its coaches, but conduct the training and evaluation sessions as well. All teams will have a head coach, an assistant coach and a team manager.**

### **Structure**

VABA Bruins will have teams at the rising 6th grade (U12), 7th grade (U13), and 8th grade (U14) levels. Other grade levels are possible depending on the level of interest and availability of VABA-trained coaches.

### **Tryouts and team formation/selection**

- Each VABA Bruin head coach determines the roster size and makes player selections for their respective team.

This is accomplished through personal invitation, specific requests from those interested in participating and/or open tryout. **VABA Bruins coaches will actively evaluate individual athletes during the winter season to see who may be good candidates to play AAU basketball. Interested athletes should inquire or request to participate on specific teams as soon as possible**, and should communicate directly with VABA ([Bruins@PlayVABA.org](mailto:Bruins@PlayVABA.org) or call 434-242-7729). As interested families communicate with us, VABA will compile a list for coaches. Practice days and times and tournament schedules are determined by the coaches and communicated to the team's families when they sign up.

### **BRUINS "Black" / BRUINS "Red"**

Families/athletes are given the choice to play for a "Bruins Black" or a "Bruins Red" team.

#### Bruins Black:

- \*Athletes play predominantly basketball
- \*Practices are up to 2x/week
- \*Weekend tournaments begin in spring

#### Bruins Red:

- \*Athletes participate in spring sports
- \*Practices are no more than 1x/week
- \*Weekend tournaments begin in the summer

### **Player and Family Commitment**

Players and their families must be able to commit to the practice days and times, tournaments and games **as a condition of being selected to the team**. At the discretion of the coach, failure to follow through with the commitment may result in a player being removed from the team.

- **Coaches will determine the level of commitment, practice days, the number of weekly practices, the weekend tournament schedules, etc.**

### **Cost**

**All costs are estimates.** The cost of a VABA team apparel, uniform & gear will be approximately \$120 - 150 per player (this cost may or may not include the gym rental fees attributed for each team's practice needs). Other costs such as tournament entry fees, summer league fees, practice-gym rental fees will be determined. It is estimated that there will be approximately 10 total tournaments at an average cost of around \$200 per event, per team (divided among the team participants). As such, the cost per player for the uniform, tournaments, and summer league should be approximately \$350. Personal travel costs such as meals and lodging are not included in these estimates. Players and families will be responsible for the actual costs which may be higher or lower than these estimates.

### **Fundraising**

Fundraising opportunities will be made available to all VABA Bruin teams – and teams have the discretion to choose their own means by which to raise funds in order to minimize costs.

### **Scholarship Support**

VABA is committed to fostering participation in its programs without regard to a player or family's ability to pay. To that end, VABA offers scholarships and encourages any otherwise interested player or family to contact VABA directly about scholarship availability.



## Schedule

- *A potential schedule may look like this (see below) – but VABA Bruins coaches will make final decisions on the overall schedule based on the coaches' availability and the vision they have for their team, all within the framework of the VABA Mission.*
- *Overall the VABA Bruins program is centered around a "year-round" concept – the idea being that student-athletes will gain the most from an on-going program that provides continuity and consistency with one team, and one qualified/trained head coach, while always staying consistent with the VABA Mission of character and skill development.*

### SPRING:

The VABA Bruin program begins in the spring of each year (mid-March). Practices take place once or twice a week with occasional tournaments (1-3 day tournaments) on specified weekends.

### SUMMER:

Starting June 1, teams would be participating in regular weekend tournaments with the hopes of qualifying for larger sanctioned AAU tournaments. From June 1 through mid-July, each VABA Team will play in a series of weekend tournaments. From June 1 through July 31, VABA Teams will continue to practice at least one time each week. During June and continuing through July 31, each VABA Bruins team will also play in the **VABA Summer League**. With a break in the month of August, team activities would resume again in the fall.

### FALL:

Beginning in September and going through the start of the winter season, the VABA Bruins would practice one time each week with the focus being on individual fundamentals and team development. There will be no games during this period.

### WINTER:

For those in grades 5 – 8 and participating in the VDBL, Bruins teams would play only in one-day Saturday-only events that would not conflict with the VDBL winter team schedule. There are no VABA Bruins practices during the VDBL winter season. Any VABA Bruins teams in the ninth grade and up would not participate in the winter, focusing on their high school season.



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