

## Frequently Asked Questions

1. General Comments about adding more practice/ game times
  - a. Adding more practices throughout the season is something the RCBA looks into every year. The greatest limitation in our ability to do this is the availability of gym space. We strive each year to try and give teams more time on the court, gym availability determines whether or not we are able to do this. For the past two seasons we have informed coaches that we have picked up gym time on the weekends and that if any team would like an additional practice they can book it through our office.
  
2. The December Break- Concerns the break is too long
  - a. The December break is a longer break due to the availability of gym space to us. The school boards block user groups after the first weekend in December until after the first weekend in January. We are trying to work with the school boards to allow us access to the facilities for one-two more weeks in December, but in the meantime we are unfortunately unable to continue to run regular league operations during this time. We have managed to get permission from the public school system to use one of their high schools during this blackout period so we are able to now put on our 3on3 Winter Classic, which is open to players in grade 5-8.
  
3. Break Between End of Regular Season and Playoffs is Too Long for Grade 5-8
  - a. Based on a combination of gym availability and referee availability the RCBA currently operates its 9 division playoffs/windups on different weekends. Once we receive the facility bookings from the school systems/city we work backwards from the last weekend we have available to us (historically the last weekend in March, unless Easter is in March and then it is a week earlier than that). The school systems decided a few years back to give a weeks break in February so we no longer have access to gyms during that week.

This break interferes when the regular season ends for grade 5&6 as well as when we can run playoffs for grade 5&6. We tried the first two years to run the playoffs on the 2<sup>nd</sup> weekend of the week off, but feedback from the coaches at the AGM was that they don't want to go into playoffs missing a practice that week. So we have now moved everything back so that while regular season games have to end the weekend before the Family Day long weekend, the playoffs don't occur until the 1<sup>st</sup> week in March. This also pushes back the grade 7-12 playoffs but we try to get the teams one more game in between the break and playoffs. The issue in the grade 7&8 divisions comes in when we have an odd number of teams so one team will end up with an extra long break because of the bye week.
  
4. Wishes to extend the season
  - a. We receive a fair amount of comments about extending the season, we likewise receive a fair amount of comments complimenting the current length of the season. Our season length is currently set to allow players to transition into other sports in the spring such as baseball, softball, football, soccer etc. We encourage kids to participate in a variety of sports (as recommend by the Long Term Athlete Development model the RCBA follows). We do offer a Spring League, which is a 6 week 3 on 3 program, to give players who would like to continue to play basketball the opportunity to do so. Our programs currently run between 12 and 20 weeks (the older the division, the more weeks of playing time)

## 5. Referee concerns

- a. The majority of comments we receive are about refereeing. We want to remind all our members that our league is a developmental league; not just for players and coaches but also for referees. The RCBA is where people come to learn how to referee so that they can advance to the high school and university level. The RCBA takes measures to help ensure that our referees get the proper training in order to be successful. Referees have mandatory clinics at the start of each season, and must also must pass a written exam to become part of the league. Unless the person is a transfer in from another city/program with proven experience, they will begin their training in our grade 3&4 program. The league has an evaluation process in place where senior officials come out and observe all levels of our referees. These observations are recorded and given to our referee in chief for follow up. The evaluator will also have discussions with the referee on site to give notes for immediate implementation of recommendations as well as re-affirmation of positive behaviours. Once a referee has passed the proper evaluations they are able to move up to the next age division.
- b. While we do our best to keep those senior level referee's active in our league, the majority of our referees are working with 0-4 years' experience. We do our best to integrate the referee training program into the RCBA player development program by placing our newest referees with our youngest divisions in order to give them time to develop their basic skills in a positive gym atmosphere. Where we sometimes run into issues is that once high school basketball season starts (especially in January and February when there are high school tournaments every weekend) we not only lose our senior referees to these outside events but we also lose our "middle" referees as they tend to be players on high school teams who are participating in these outside events. That means that sometimes, in order to not have a game defaulted, we have to pull up one of our newer referees to operate in a division above where they are being trained.
- c. We always encourage feedback about all aspects of our league, referees included. We appreciate all feedback we receive about our officials, and we do our best to make implementations and suggestions based on your feedback, to improve the quality of the experience for all. If you do have some feedback for our officials, please be specific, so we can do our best to resolve the issue.

## 6. Team drafting process/ Evaluations

- a. Making sure that the kids have an excellent experience in the RCBA is our number one goal. Starting out in the lower grades (K-4), we emphasize a fun atmosphere and do our best to put school buddies and friends together on teams to make them feel more comfortable. In the upper grades, we feel that playing on a team that has a balance of skill level, height and experience that is evenly matched across the age division contributes significantly to a great season.

We want to ensure that everyone understands how we put these teams together.

Here's the low-down:

### Grade 1 & 2

Players are placed onto teams ensuring an approximate equal number of boys and girls, while also ensuring kids from the same schools are kept together. Whenever possible, player requests to be placed on the same team as a friend are considered.

### Grade 3 & 4

In the grade 3 and 4 programs, teams have a practice night as well as a game each week,

so player availability becomes important. We must first match players with coaches that have practices on the nights that they are available. Next, we try to include kids from the same school on teams, as well as consider requests for friends to be placed on the same team. Unfortunately we are not always able to accommodate requests, as other logistical factors must take precedence (practice night options, facility availability, limits on number of players per team for adherence to fair play policy)

#### Grade 5 – 12

Similar to the lower grades, availability is an important factor when putting these teams together. However, the addition of player evaluations to the program provides specific information on individual players that makes this team selection process more thorough. Evaluations are used to assess an individual's abilities within a set of core basketball competencies, i.e. shooting, dribbling, game play, height, etc. Once the evaluations are complete, players are ranked by their evaluation score and then teams are drafted using all of the above information. These evaluations and team selections are completed by individuals with no potential biases (neutral third party evaluators). In 2015 we also began tracking which club a player participates in, as we limit the number of players from the same club to 2 per RCBA team.

The high school program is also modified slightly to take into consideration player requests as it is currently considered a recreational program.

#### b. Potential Roadblocks

Players that do not attend evaluations – especially difficult for new players/players in grade 5 when there are no evaluation results on file from previous seasons

Nights of availability for practices

Coaches who have strong players pairing up to coach one team

Misinformation from players on club team status

Players who purposely do not put in full effort at evaluations in order to be ranked lower to end up on a specific team

Lack of depth in guard position

Players level of commitment to attend practices and games

#### 7. Updating results on the website

- a. The results on the website are updated as soon as we receive the game sheets from our supervisors. The supervisors are required to mail in the game sheets, there is a delay in that process and sometimes we are not able to update the games right away.

#### 8. Start pooling the players earlier than Grade 7/8

- a. This is something we discuss each year. One reason we do not pool the grade 6s is because we do not have enough teams. We also do not group the grade 5s and 6s together, because of the physical maturity difference between those two age groups.

#### 9. Fun, Fair Play and Development

- a. The RCBA is built on the values of fun, fair play and development. We want to ensure that all players receive the same amount of playing time. We want all players to have the same opportunity to enjoy the sport of basketball, learn new skills, and develop each season into a better basketball player. We would like to remind parents that this is our main goal for our league!

#### 10. Club Teams

- a. As more club teams are created in the city, we receive questions about the league's openness to working with these clubs. If anyone would like to share any ideas about

how the RCBA can become involved with the club system, please email us any idea's, we are open to hearing what you might think would work for the RCBA!

11. Issues regarding coaches

- a. There were some concerns raised about coaching in our survey results, and this is a good opportunity to explain how we handle these types of concerns. *We always encourage parents to raise concerns about coaching as they come up.* Issues can be reported for your child's coach, or other team's coaches if issues arise during game play. We understand that in the best interest of the players, when concerns are brought to us they remain anonymous from the coach, so that no biases occur because of this. If need be we will have an RCBA staff or board member attend a game and/or practice and follow up as necessary. Each situation is different, we always ensure that the concerns raised will not negatively affect the player(s) on the team.

12. Player commitments to other sports

- a. We had a few mentions of participants who also play hockey, soccer, volleyball etc. which lead to absences of those players throughout the season. In our registration form we do have an area where parents can identify other sports their child plays, which is taken into consideration in the drafting process. We also have a league policy that if a player has missed two practices, the coach can sit the player for the first half of the next game. If they miss 3 the coach has the option to sit them for the full game. We strive to create policies that encourage the importance of attending all practices and games, while still following our league values of fun, fair play and development.