

VAA Traveling Basketball

2025-2026 Season



VAA Traveling Basketball Purpose

Welcome to the Valley Athletic Association (VAA) Traveling Basketball program. The program is for athletes in grades 3rd through 8th grade. Traveling basketball is a more competitive level of play than Community or In-House Basketball. It is a larger time commitment compared to community basketball. The program is created to provide a fun, fair and challenging environment for players to develop their basketball skills.



Board Members

Name	Role	E-Mail	Age Group Leadership
Damon Laliberte	Commissioner	damon.laliberte@vaasports.org	8th
Chad Fitterer	Boys Commissioner	cefitterer@gmail.com	3rd
Becky Sandahl	Community Basketball, Girls Commissioner	beckysandahl@yahoo.com	6th
Jennifer Gates	Secretary	Jennifer.gates@vaasports.org	Compliance
Erin Chamlee	Treasurer	erinchamlee@gmail.com	3rd
Jenny Quinn	Tournament Operations	Jennyquinn310@gmail.com	4th
Bryan Orlenko	Tournament Director	bryan@orlenko.net	6th
Andrea Barnes	Board Member	fingalbarnes@gmail.com	5th
Leah Martin	Board Member	lmartin@csp.edu	7th
Quinnesha Hill	Board Member	Quinnesha8113@gmail.com	4th
Paul Sutton	Board Member	coach.paulsutton@gmail.com	7th



2024-2025 Parent Feedback

- Tryouts/Team formation – Look at the tryout process, make sure everyone understands what goes into it, understand locked/unlocked spots, and timing of team release
- Practice Time – Shared space, late and early practices, timeliness of release
- Paid Coaches and Fundraising – Understand the why behind paid coaches and look at fundraising opportunities
- Continued Focus on our Girls Program – K-2 Community Basketball FREEE again in 2025-26.
- Uniforms – Ensure we have the right sizes at tryouts and every parent signs off
- Coaching – Understand the mechanism for providing coach feedback early enough for us to impact. Implemented Mid-Year Survey.



Tryouts and Team Formation

- Tryouts will be Wednesday Sep 10th and Sunday Sep 14th
- New Evaluators this year
- You have to attend both sessions to be on the top team
 - Players will be evaluated through fundamental drills and scrimmaging
 - All but the last 2 spots are locked on the team based on the evaluators, the remaining spots are a discussion with the coach, the evaluators, and the board lead for that grade
 - Coach candidates from the top 6 will get preference, but the board reserves the right to choose the best coach for the role, coaches may not be selected until weeks after tryout if we are searching
 - If you do not accept your team placement there is no refund
 - Only the board lead will enter the gym during tryouts, board members who do not have a kid in the grade being evaluated will work with the evaluators on any questions and finalizing teams with the coached
 - If we can't get the teams out by 7:00 PM on Sunday night we will hold until later in the week and keep you updated



Wednesday, September 10th at Apple Valley Community Center

*****Arrival time is 30 minutes prior to tryout**

TIME	GRADE LEVEL
5:00 – 6:30 PM	7 th and 8 th Grade Boys
6:40 – 8:10 PM	3 rd and 4 th Grade Boys
8:20 – 9:50 PM	5 th and 6 th Grade Boys

Sunday, September 14th at Apple Valley High School

*****Arrival Time is 30 minutes prior to tryout**

TIME	GRADE LEVEL
11:45AM – 1:00PM	7 th and 8 th Grade Boys
1:15 – 2:30 PM	6 th and 7 th Grade Girls + 3 rd Grade Boys
2:45 – 4:00 PM	4 th and 5 th Grade Boys
4:15 – 5:30 PM	6 th Grade Boys + 3 rd /4 th /5 th Grade Girls

Tryouts and Team Formation - Boys

- Here are the number of kids and teams we will have by grade
 - In some grades this year we will have cuts, teams will have 8 to 10 players, with most teams being 9 to 10
 - If a player is cut they will be offered community basketball as an option and the difference will be refunded. If you are not interested in community basketball you will get a full refund
 - If in assessments we believe community could be a better fit, we will call and talk to the parents and leave it up to them
 - If you do not accept your team placement you will not get a refund
- 3rd – 20 kids (Two Equal Teams)
 - 4th – 22 kids (Two Team of 10 + Two Cuts)
 - 5th – 19 kids (Two Teams of 8)
 - 6th – 20 kids (Two Teams of 10)
 - 7th – 34 Kids (Three Teams of 10 + Three-to-Four Cuts)
 - 8th – 16 Kids (Two Teams of 8)

Basketball Sizes:

3rd/4th 27.5

5th/6th 28.5

7th/8th 29.5



Tryouts and Team Formation - Girls

Here are the number of kids and teams we will have by grade:

- We will try to keep all girls that go out and move some kids to different grades to make it work (with parent approval)
- Any teams that go above 10 will get an added tournament to ensure we get more playing time for the group
- If in assessments we believe community could be a better fit, we will call and talk to the parents and leave it up to them

- 3rd/4th – 11 kids
- 5th – 11 kids
- 6th – 11 Kids
- 7th – 8 kids

Basketball Sizes:

3rd/4th 27.5

5th/6th 28.5

7th/8th 28.5



Coach Selection

- VAA is built on parent volunteer coaches because we have a lot of great ones and it allows us to keep our registration fees low
- We look at past years evaluations and interview any new candidates or in grades where there are more than one candidate
- Team placement has no bearing on whether you sign up to coach, teams are figured out first and then we decide the coaches
- If no one volunteers to coach for a team at the time of tryouts we will place a TBD as a coach. That means we need a parent to volunteer. If no parent volunteers it will be the responsibility of the parents with help from the board on connections and possibilities to find a paid coach. The team will be responsible for half of the cost.
- Paid coaches will be pursued in certain situations. The board upped this to cover 5 to 7 paid coaches a year with the team covering the other half up to an extra \$150 per player. This can be offset through fundraising driven by the team.
 - **Currently looking at paid coaches for the 8th Grade Boys teams, one 7th Grade Boys team, One 6th Grade Boys team. Still looking for a parent volunteer for 4th Grade Boys and 5th Grade Boys**



Practices

- We are in a gym crunch at this time in the program/district
- We share space with Eastview/Rosemount basketball and volleyball and they are all growing
- Gym space is not expanding yet...
- Goal is to get teams 2 practices a week with 2 to 3 hours of practice time
- This will lead to the following considerations when scheduling practices
 - We will share practice space at the CC and the high school, this will rotate between teams
 - Our older teams are going to have to go to 9:45 on certain nights
 - We will look at 1:15 practices to fit 3 in a night at some of our gyms
- Our goal is to get this out earlier this year with the caveat that if we find more space late, there could be some changes as we give teams more time
- We are looking at the following: gyms in other districts, trainer gym space, trying to get any additional open space at the high school and community center



Uniforms

- All new players to the program need a uniform which will be an extra \$50 dollar charge. The VAA Big Board covered 50% of our new uniform cost for this season!
- These jerseys will be worn for the next two years, so take that into account during sizing.
- If you need a new jersey top or bottom in 2026-27, you will be able to order one at the player expense.
- All parents must come in and sign a sheet confirming the uniform size selected for the season.
- Players will provide their top three jersey number choices. Jersey number(s) must be 5 or under (i.e. 55, 44, 13, 5). Numbers like 99, 77, 8, 18 are not-legal.
- We will have all sizes available to try on
- We will order new shooting shirts for all players



Playing Time Policy

We believe all kids in the program should get consistent playing time during the season. Every kid should get to play in every half.

This is looked at across the season, not necessarily every game. There may be certain games where kids play more than others, but should balance out throughout the season.

- 3rd and 4th Grade – 50/50
- 5th and 6th Grade – 60/40 – Kids should be getting at least 16 minutes on a 10 player team
- 7th and 8th Grade – 70/30 – Kids should be getting at least 12 minutes on a 10 player team. In 14 minute stop clock this will be 8 minutes a game.

*these time estimates assume 10 kids on the team and 20 minute running halves. With more kids or with shorter halves these times will go down



Parents Responsibility at Tryouts

- You **must** come in with your son or daughter and check-in
- Check-in with the uniform booth and provide sizing and number choices and sign off that you are good
- Bring a \$375 volunteer dollar check for **EACH** kid in the program
 - This check is held, but not cashed unless you do not sign up for volunteer hours or fulfill the hours you sign up for
 - Volunteer hours will range from 4 to 6 hours per kid, but it all depends on the size of our tournaments
 - If you don't have personal checks, you should be able to go online with your bank and have a check sent to us or visit your for a couple of blank checks
 - If it is difficult for you to volunteer, you can always ask family, friends, or offer to pay a high school kid to cover your hours. Some high school kids even need to find volunteer hours to fulfill requirements
 - There is no excuses accepted for not fulfilling your hours, checks will be cashed at the end of the season if you do not volunteer
 - Head coaches will not be required to volunteer
- Sign a copy of our parent handbook. Copies will be available on-site.



Parent Guidelines

- Remember that the focus of our program is player development and having fun playing the game of basketball. Winning is not our top priority.
- Practices are closed to parents unless coaches open them up – this allows the players to listen and focus on what their coaches are trying to teach them.
- You are representing our community at tournaments. Please practice good sportsmanship with our players, coaches, referees, and other teams. There is a massive shortage of refs due to the working environment.
- Conflict Resolution
 - First reach out to the coach and talk with them about your issue
 - Next reach out to the age group coordinator OR the boys director (Chad Fitterer) or girls director (Becky Sandahl)
 - Reach out to the commissioner (Damon Laliberte) if that is not solving the problem



Boys Tourney Schedule

Date	Tourney	3rd Grade White	3rd Grade Brown	4th Grade White	4th Grade Brown	5th Grade White	5th Grade Brown	6th Grade White	6th Grade Brown	7th Grade White	7th Grade Black	7th Grade Brown	8th Grade White
Nov 8-9, 2025	Eastview	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Nov 15-16th	Tartan - Oakdale		1										
Nov 22-23, 2025	Rosemount	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Nov 22-23, 2026	Inner Grove Heights		1										
Dec 13-14, 2025	Mpls		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Jan 3-4, 2026	Hastings	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Jan 3-4, 2026	New Prague		1										
Jan 17-18th, 2026	Hopkins	1	1				1				1	1	
Jan 17-18th, 2026	Lakeville North					1		1	1	1			1
Jan 24-25, 2025	Bloomington Jefferson		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Jan 31, Feb 1, 202	Fridley										1		
Feb 7-8, 2026	Cottage Grove	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1
Feb 14-15, 2026	Apple Valley	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Feb 21-22, 2026	Burnsville										W		
Mar 7-8, 2026	State Tourney	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1				
Mar 14-15, 2025	State Tourney									1	1	1	1



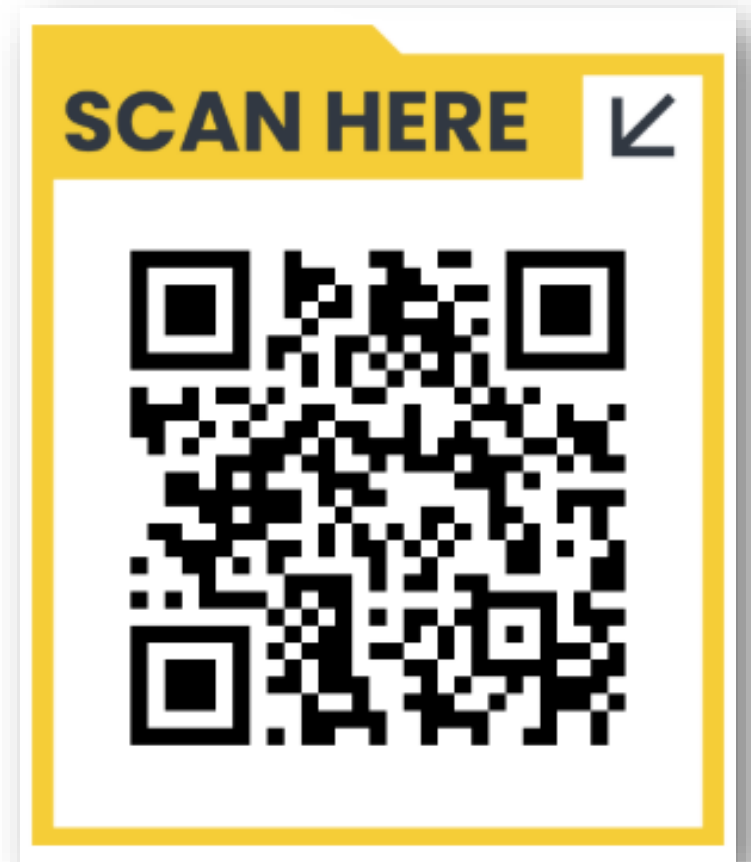
Girls Tourney Schedule

Date	Tournament	4C	5C	6C	7C
Oct 26	Shakopee Saber Jam <u>PreSeason</u>		X	X	
Nov 1 – 2					
Nov 8 – 9	Prior Lake	X			
Nov 15 – 16	Lakeville North		X	X	X
Nov 22 – 23					
Nov 29 – 30	THANKSGIVING				
Dec 6	City of Lakes Classic		X	X	X
Dec 13 – 14	Big East Stillwater	X	X	X	X
Dec 20 – 21	WINTER BREAK				
Dec 27 – 28	WINTER BREAK				

Date	Tournament	4C	5C	6C	7C
Jan 3 – 4					
Jan 10 – 11	Eastview Lightning	X	X	X	X
Jan 17 – 18	Chaska Super Classic		X	X	X
Jan 24 – 25	Apple Valley	X	X	X	X
Jan 31 – Feb 1					
Feb 7 – 8	Farmington	X	X	X	X
Feb 14 – 15	Blaine	X	X	X	X
Feb 21 – 22					
Feb 28 – 29	State	X	X	X	X

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- We're excited to launch our **official VAA Basketball account!**
 - Important reminders & event updates
 - Game day highlights & tournament photos
 - Player & Coach spotlights - and more!



www.vaasports.org

