

## **Signs of a Successful Little Dribblers' Basketball Local League**

Little Dribblers' Basketball, Inc. was started in 1969. Since that time, we have had thousands of very successful local leagues from all over the country. There seem to be common threads that weave together successful local leagues.

The first key to a successful league is organization. Leagues need to have a strong, well organized Board of Directors that have a shared focus to create the very best youth basketball program for their community. Local Boards must abide by the organizations By-Laws decisions are made consistently and fairly. Board must have checks and balances. The League President is the head administrator for the league but should not be the only person making decisions. The League Treasurer must provide reports regarding all income and expenses. Boards should have procedures in place for collecting, counting and depositing cash. All Board members have a fiduciary duty to their families and to the community to ensure that money is handled properly. A strong Board of Directors is committed to the success of the local league.

The next key to a successful league is having great coaches. Leagues must recruit volunteer coaches that understand the philosophy of the league and that has the best interest of all his/her players in mind not just his/her child. Selecting great coaches should start with a Coach Application. This application should ask questions so that the Board can make informed selections. Coaches must provide a current Criminal Background Report. Anyone that has a criminal history of any crimes involving children are automatically disqualified from coaching. Local Board of Directors must review all reports to ensure that they are assigning coaches that have the well-being of all children in mind.

Successful leagues understand that young players need to learn the fundamentals of basketball. So many coaches jump in on the first practice with young players and start teaching them an offense. Successful leagues make sure that practices are primarily focused

on teaching fundamentals. Programs designed to improve player development, will be successful.

Youth Basketball should be fun. Players need to enjoy practices and games. Players have fun when they are involved. Practices should be designed to have players engaged as much as possible. Kids do not enjoy standing in line watching other kids play. Coaches should take the time to develop practice plans that optimize practice time.

Kids learn by doing. Successful leagues have rules in place that ensures that all players are guaranteed playing time no matter their ability level. Successful leagues are open of all players in the community regardless of ability. The coach that cut Michael Jordan when he was young, lanky, lacked the ability of other players, could have deprived us of one of the best basketball players that ever played the game. Luckily, Michael Jordan did not let being cut deter him. Unfortunately, young players who are discouraged and embarrassed by coaches that are only focused on winning instead of player development can cause some children to never pick up a basketball again.

We all have seen children and adults out of control at youth sporting events. Successful leagues have Rules and Regulations that ensure that children have a safe, fun learning environment. Leagues should implement Codes of Conduct for coaches, players, and parents. The Codes of Conduct should outline the expected behavior as well as the consequences for failing to abide by the Code of Conduct. When coaches, players or parents break the Code of Conduct, Boards must consistently follow through with the consequences.

Finally, successful leagues provide more than just basketball training. Successful leagues realize that they can use basketball to provide character development such as teamwork, responsibility, citizenship and cooperation.