

MESSAGE FROM COACH LUEDTKE:

Hello Parents!

We are looking forward to another year of Team Uptop hoops. We have some exciting changes for the program and expect another great year of hoops!

First off, we are requesting registrations to be returned by November 7 so we can have uniforms before our first tournament. This will allow us to finalize the uniform order with Uptop Clothing. In the past, we accepted registrations through early December which caused us to receive uniforms in January. This year, we will place our uniform order before the high school winter sports teams and will speed things up tremendously.

We will be offering teams for the 4th thru 8th grades, and similar to last year, we will offer a 3rd grade level for 1st thru 3rd boys who wish to play. Last year was our first year doing a 3rd grade team and we ended up playing in more tournaments than anticipated. This year we will be cutting back on the number of tournaments for the 3rd grade level and focusing more on skill work and scrimmages. We believe this will aide in their development more than what we did last year.

Speaking of development, we would like to remind everyone that Team Uptop is designed for developing basketball skills for any boy who is interested in playing travel basketball. While winning is fun, Team Uptop is not focused solely on winning. Instead, we are focused on skill development, working as a team, and always giving your best effort. While a team may not be winning at the lower grade levels, the boys will have the foundation to succeed at the high school level. Additionally, our experience indicates that winning tournaments in grade school has no correlation with playing basketball in high school. We recognize that people have different philosophies on youth basketball. If you are a parent who is focused more on winning than player development, you may want to start your own travel team so you can teach the things that are more in line with your philosophy.

We have had complaints the past couple of years in the lower grades about not having A and B teams. We will continue to make even teams in the 3rd-6th grades as this is part of our philosophy of developing every kid. Additionally, there are no tournaments that offer an A and B bracket for 3rd to 6th grades. If we were to make A and B teams, one team would be successful and the other team would be getting beat up on every game. This defeats the purpose of keeping as many kids in the program as possible.

It is my goal as the head Varsity coach at Butte High to have at least 5 seniors who can dribble, pass, and shoot every year. Team Uptop is designed to provide every kid the opportunity to play travel basketball. We hope to develop basketball skills and a love for the game that will help them stay involved as long as possible. In our first year of Team Uptop, we had sixteen 8th graders participate. Those boys are now seniors and it appears that only 6 of those boys are still in the high school program. We have lost kids for many different reasons; specializing in other sports, not enjoying basketball anymore, not liking the coach, their parents not liking the coach, etc... The point is that we cannot choose 7 or 8 kids in the 4th grade and hope that they all continue to play thru their senior year. We are banking on power in numbers.

In the 7th and 8th grades we begin to have an A and B team. This is for several reasons, including there being A and B tournaments starting in the 7th grade. It is during the 7th grade that the tournaments get

much more competitive as well. At that point it is important to split kids up who have a higher skill set to compete against better competition. Those boys with a lesser skill set can work on skills against kids their own level and this helps tremendously with their development. **AN IMPORTANT NOTE:** Of the 6 seniors left from our first Uptop team, **two were from the A team and four were from the B team!**

There is a \$300 fee to play for Team Uptop. We do everything we can to keep the fee as low as possible. This fee is important to running the program because it covers the cost of paying our coaches, helping with the purchase of uniforms, and other fees associated with running a travel program. The team entry fees into each tournament consume a lot of the \$300 Uptop registration fee. Last year, over 50% of the \$300 fee was allocated to pay tournament entry fees. Please keep in mind that we also provide scholarships for those less fortunate who cannot afford the \$300 fee. We include a form for anyone interested in applying for those financial based scholarships.

Lastly, please keep in mind that we spend a lot of time trying to provide each kid the best experience possible. While we know that we are not perfect, we are continuously striving to improve each year. We run Team Uptop with each kid's welfare in mind and we run it with concepts that are in line with our philosophy. Despite our best efforts, we received a couple of text messages opening with "for \$300 we should be getting...". If we are met with those type of messages, we will politely refund your money and encourage you to start your own teams. We understand that there are a lot of different ways to do things when it comes to youth sports. We will always do things to the best of our ability to help your child.

If you have any questions, please come see us either before or after practice.

Thank you,
Matt Luedtke