

LEHI GIRLS BANTAM BASKETBALL

FAQ

What is "Lehi Bantam Basketball" ?

There is a basketball league called Utah County Bantam Basketball. This is associated with the National AAU program (every player must be registered with the national AAU system). This league is designed for both boys and girls, grades 4 – 8. Each High school would have their own youth bantam program, that acts as the "feeder" program to the high school basketball program. Every high school does it a little differently. At Lehi, the High School programs are very involved in their youth bantam program. Lehi Bantam basketball is not a program for ALL of the Lehi city youth. The Lehi Bantam Basketball program is the official feeder program for LEHI High School girls basketball. Skyridge, for example, has their own bantam program for those kids in Skyridge boundaries. The Bantam rules do say they want kids to play bantam basketball in their own geographic high school boundaries.

As far as the level of competition, Bantam is a step above local city league Jr. Jazz, but maybe not as competitive as Club basketball. It is a fairly competitive league and we do expect girls (in the older grades at least, 6th +) to be competent enough with the fundamentals, i.e. being able to keep a dribble, using both hands, consistently make a running layup, and being able to strongly make a pass.

Technically, anyone could organize their own team and go and enter the team into the bantam league. However, we put a lot of effort through this official program to help arrange so many aspects of a fun and positive season. The girls Lehi Varsity head coach is close to this program overseeing everything. He gets to know all the girls. He will come to practices, come watch games. Our program gets to participate in things like bantam night during the varsity season where we get to go into the locker room pre and post-game. The varsity girls come and help the bantam teams at times. We arrange the gym and practice schedules for all the teams. So there are many advantages to enrolling your girls into our program versus going out on your own with a team.

Can Any Girl Play Bantam?

The general answer is Yes, we try to get any girl that wants to play on a team. There are occasions where we cannot fit every girl. Generally, for the younger grades, 4th, 5th, maybe 6th, we would try our absolute hardest to place all girls that come to tryouts. By 7th or 8th grade, it does get a little more serious as they are just a couple short years away from High School basketball. It is possible we could make cuts. If we had 12 good ball players in 8th grade for example, and 2 or 3 brand new girls to basketball were to show up and want to play, we would probably cut those couple girls. It's hard to run good practices and develop girls if the level of play is substantially different across the team. Those players are probably better suited for the local Jr. Jazz program. Another scenario sometimes out of our control is how the numbers shake out for any given grade, and if we have enough coaches. We try really hard to keep our rosters to 7, absolute maximum of 8 players. This is done to give kids enough game time opportunity so they can develop. If we were to have 20 girls for example, and only have 2 coaches for a given grade, it's

possible we would need to cut about 4 girls, so we have two teams with 8 girls. This is not taken lightly, but sometimes it's a situation we cannot work out to place every girl.

How are Teams Formed?

We hold a tryout around the last week of September/first week of October. The goal is to try and find the best fit for each girl where she is able to play WITH and AGAINST similar talent. It is very hard and doesn't always work out perfectly. The Bantam Leagues will have an "A" division and a "B" division for every grade. Sometimes with enough teams, they will have an A, B, and B2 division. We have all our coaches come to tryouts, and then work together to form the teams. We do get a little more serious in the latter grades, 6th – 8th. Oftentimes with 4th and 5th grade, there isn't as big of a gap with the talent, so we figure as long as the girls are out there playing it is helpful for their development.

Sometimes we do more than one A team if there is enough talent. We will form teams, then it is up to each coach to get with their team, analyze their talent and decide if they want to enter the A division of bantam, or the B division. The bottom line is we do our best with teams. It's impossible for us to perfectly please everyone. It's impossible to get everything just right. We ask that you understand how challenging this can be and approach with a good attitude. Every year there will be good girls deserving of that top "A" team, but we just cannot accommodate that perfectly. We have to cap the teams at 7/8 girls. Sometimes it is a matter of position as well. We could have 3-4 good guards that are chosen, and even though there could be a couple more good guards, a coach may pick a taller girl or two for their team, so they have a little height. That doesn't mean those couple guards were any less talented or less deserving, it's just the nature of forming teams.

Another consideration with roster construction at tryouts is whether or not girls will indeed be going to Lehi High School or somewhere else. This is overlooked more in the younger grades, but as they get older, one of the goals of this program is to prepare girls for Lehi High School basketball. Every year we do get a handful of girls that come play with us from out of area. We've debated how to handle this. We have landed on the position that we will still try to welcome and place girls on a team, however if two girls are pretty equal in talent, and we know one is for sure a future Lehi HS attendee, and the other is likely NOT going to Lehi HS, we will give the nod to the girl that's for sure going to Lehi HS.

We do ask if there are any MAJOR concerns, that those are communicated with us BEFORE tryouts. It is extremely hard and frustrating when we go through so much heartache and struggle to put teams together, and when we announce them we start fielding calls and emails with complaints about how they turned out. This has a ripple effect through the entire grade, and makes us almost have to go through the whole process again. We will start cracking down here. If there is a MAJOR issue you want us to consider for your daughter, please let us know BEFORE we make teams and we will do our best.

How do Practices Work?

We rent the Willowcreek Junior High Gym and hold practices there. Willowcreek will give us 2-3 nights a week, and we assign each team their practice time. Practice nights are any weeknight Monday through Thursday. You can typically expect each team to have practice two nights a week for 60-90 minutes each. It's a little heavier to start the season and scales down a little bit the farther we get into games. We

absolutely understand that kids are into many things, different sports, clubs, activities, etc. We know 100 % commitment to one sport is hard. While we don't necessarily expect every girl to be able to make every practice, we do try and set a minimum expectation that they can make at least one practice a week. It is hard on a coach and a team when certain girls can never make practice. Coaches are trying to prepare their teams for a competitive league. They need to put in some plays, a basic offense, defense, out of bounds plays, etc. It's frustrating for teammates and coaches when you're in a game and a girl has no idea what any of the plays are because they are never at practice. The last point here is that the level of commitment and practice availability is a consideration into how we place teams.

When and Where are Games?

The Bantam League has 3 different Leagues/Seasons. There is a Fall League, which is 6 total games, all played in October. Then the main league is the Winter season, which runs from mid-November to the end of February. Winter is 10 total games, and a small tournament for the top few teams in each division. Then finally there is a Spring season, which is 6 more games all in March. Once teams are formed, it is up to each coach to talk to their players and parents, and decide which of these the team wants to play in. They will always do the main winter league, but the Fall and Spring is up to that coach and the players. We encourage as many games as possible, but it's not mandatory for a team to play in all 3. Games are scheduled at schools all over Utah County. A fair expectation is for about half the games to be closer to home, schools like Lehi HS, Skyridge, Lehi Jr High, etc. Then the other half could be anywhere from American Fork all the way down to Payson. Most bantam games are Saturday, but they also do games Monday and Wednesday nights. The bantam director can work with teams for special scheduling requests. That's up to each coach to communicate and figure out with their team.

How do Jerseys work?

We have a vendor that helps with our jerseys. We will get details out at the start of the season for any girl needing to order a jersey. We get nice Lehi branded black and white reversible uniforms. You can expect a new uniform (short and jersey, both reversible) to be around \$100

What are all the Costs Associated with a Full Season?

Here are all the potential costs you can expect to pay for a full bantam season:

- 1) \$20 fee to register your player with the AAU (you can buy an annual or 2 year membership, but every player needs an active AAU membership)
- 2) Jersey – IF your daughter needs a new jersey, between \$100-125, depending if they add a shooting shirt, a name engraved on the back, etc. They can wear their own white or black shorts and just buy the top.
- 3) Gym Costs for Practices – As a program, we pay \$75 an hour to rent Willowcreek. Every year, we take the total cost, and simply divide it between ALL bantam players. This usually comes in around \$150-\$200 per girl, depending on the total count of girls.
- 4) Dues for Team Registration into each of the 3 leagues; Spring, Winter, and Fall. Spring and Fall are \$595 per team. The Winter season is \$895. The coaches will register and pay these fees, then divide that total cost between the 7 or 8 players on their team. You will venmo the coach for this. On an average team with 7 players, that plays all 3 seasons, you can expect about \$65 for each of Fall and Spring, and about \$115 for Winter.

TOTAL (if full jersey is needed, and team plays Fall, Winter, and Spring league): \$500-\$550

How do you pick Coaches? Can anyone Coach?

Coaching is strictly volunteer from parents. They are not compensated at all, except maybe a T-Shirt from the High School 😊. We have full faith in our coaches, many times they are ex-players themselves who know the game well. If you want to help coach, please reach out (lehigirlsbantam@gmail.com). A lot of grades may already have the head coaches in place. But in my opinion, it never hurts to have more help at practices, and you can help in games. This is the thing we organize very first every year. We see what coaches are coming back, then see how many girls registered in each grade, and see if we need more coaches. If so, we will ask around for any volunteers. In other words, any one that wants to help, can certainly come and get involved with their own daughters team. I just cannot guarantee we would have a head coaching position available. We give first right of refusal to the existing coaches that coached the year before, and most of the time we get coaches that return year after year.

A Message from Lehi Varsity Girls Coach, Sean Seastrand:

"First of all, thank you to all our volunteers that help provide this opportunity. Many of our coaches and parents spend lots of time working to create this opportunity for your girls to play. Working closely with Todd (the director of our Lehi Youth Program), I know he personally spends a lot of his free time to organize, coach, and handle everything that running the program entails. It is extremely hard to juggle every grade with all the concerns that come along. Please know that not every situation is easy. Often times when parents have an issue, to accommodate that player may create another issue with a different player/team. Just know we do our best to make it all work. Our main priorities are to have a program where girls have fun, build friendships, develop their basketball abilities, and have an overall positive experience. To put it bluntly, in my experience working with youth sports, the kids WILL make the best of their situations if the parents can rally behind their daughters, teams, and coaches to support in a positive way. Please find ways to support the efforts of the girls and volunteers working to build this program into something special. As the high school coach, I look forward every year to watching the development of our girls and to working with our new incoming girls in the younger grades as well. It is a GREAT time to be a part of the Lehi Girls Basketball program in any way, as a player, coach or even just a supporting parent. Thank you!"