



2023-2024

Lady Junior Bearcat  
Basketball Expectations

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## **Program Philosophy**

*"To create an environment that encourages student-athletes to develop as competitors on and off the court through teamwork, discipline, leadership, and communication."*

## **Program Vision**

Competitive, Competent, Character-rich Student Athletes.

## **Program Mission**

The intent of the Lady Junior Bearcat Basketball program is to develop a passion for competing in all areas of the game of basketball, while learning the individual and team fundamental skills necessary to be successful at the high school level.

## **Program Purpose**

The Lady Junior Bearcat program is designed to be a feeder program for the Scottsbluff High School basketball program. To have a successful high school program, a consistent, fundamental youth program is essential.

## **Player and Parent Expectations**

**Players:** Players are expected to give their best effort at all times. They will respect their parents, coaches, teammates, opponents, and officials. The successful Lady Junior Bearcat player will commit to improving every day and work towards developing a mastery level of fundamentals. Participants are expected to use good sportsmanship and represent the Scottsbluff Girls Basketball program in a positive manner on the court, in the classroom, and within the community.

**Parents:** Parents will support their own athlete as well as others from our program and surrounding communities. Supportive parents will understand that committing to skill development now will drastically increase success later. Lady Junior Bearcat parents will adopt long range goals for their athletes and support them through the natural successes, failures, hardships, and accomplishments of the sport. Parents will be respectful to coaches, officials and players.

## **Coaching Expectations**

The measure of the most successful Lady Junior Bearcat coaches and teams will be evaluated in 3 ways:

1. The number of students that continue to participate in basketball (15/freshmen class).
2. The level at which they can perform basic fundamentals.
3. The level of program readiness they can display.

## **Participant Guidelines**

ALL Scottsbluff Public Schools students are invited and encouraged to participate in our program. Through the 5th grade, students from out of district are also invited to participate in Lady Junior Bearcat Basketball. After 6th grade, ALL Lady Junior Bearcat athletes must be Scottsbluff Public Schools students. The Junior Bearcat Program purpose is to create a competitive advantage for the Scottsbluff High School basketball program.

### **Girls programs 2nd – 5th:**

Girls should practice on the lowered baskets when at the SHS Auxiliary Gym. We want players to be fundamentally sound and confident having left the Lady Junior Bearcat program. A commitment to form and technique is directly correlated to success.

### **Girls Programs 5th -8th:**

The program will implement teams and rotations to keep all Lady Junior Bearcat athletes engaged and included in the program. These teams are eligible to use a try out process where the players are evaluated by the appropriate coaches.

### **Girls Programs 7th-8th:**

Players will pay a reduced fee due to part of their Lady Junior Bearcat season overlapping the middle school season. This will provide them both gym access and insurance after their school season finishes.

## **Practice**

Fundamental Mastery. System Development. We want our players to be competent, confident, and competitive in all areas on the basketball court. We encourage 1-2 practices a week, with age-appropriate time in the gym.

## **Clinics/Youth Camps**

Our clinic and youth camps are designed to introduce our program norms to the players and coaches. Common language and routines is our goal. If a player is going to be participating in Lady Junior Bearcat basketball, they need to be attending both the clinic and youth camp.

## **Fundraising**

All money raised for the Lady Junior Bearcat players will enter the Scottsbluff Girls Basketball fundraiser account. There are to be NO individual team fundraisers or events. Lady Junior Bearcat funds are used to purchase jerseys, insurance, security and quality equipment such as adjustable rims, shooting guns used during open gyms and practices for skill development. **All Lady Junior Bearcat funds are used to enhance the experience of the Scottsbluff Girls Basketball players 2nd Grade-12th Grade.** Any Lady Junior Bearcat coach will NOT pay the registration or clinic fee as a small token of appreciation for all the time and effort put into the program.

## Communication Guidelines

Jessica Dankowski [jdankowski@sbps.net](mailto:jdankowski@sbps.net) is the contact for any gym scheduling. High School Head Coach and director of Lady Junior Bearcat basketball Hattie Burford, [hburford@sbps.net](mailto:hburford@sbps.net), is your second point of contact for any further conflict, questions, concerns.

Please do not involve school administration as this is not a school organization. Please be mindful and supportive that our first priority is the high school teams. We believe you will want the same for your daughters while they are playing for us.

Please join our Lady Junior Bearcat Team Reach for communication from Coach Burford and other coaches. Download the Team Reach app and enter the code 69361.

## Team Selection

The cutting of players is discouraged at all grades. If a student is respectful, willing, and committed to the team, they should be included in all practice events. This being said, we are sympathetic to providing students a quality experience. In some cases, multiple teams may be necessary. In the event that two teams are needed, two equal teams will be composed during Wyo-Braska tournament play. Lady Junior Bearcat is designed to develop players, therefore, each student should be given an opportunity to play every game, regardless of opponent *through the 5th grade*. Each athlete is important; every kid wants to contribute and should be given that opportunity. Please also understand that playing time becomes a reflection of time commitment and ability in later stages, 6th-12th grades. We expect that starting in middle school, especially the 7th-8th grade, playing time and competitiveness will become more connected.

Parents, if you are experiencing issues with practice or game opportunities, please follow the chain of command:

1. Grade Level Coach- share any questions or concerns, working towards a suitable solution with all kids best interest in mind.
2. Coach Hattie Burford via email [hburford@sbps.net](mailto:hburford@sbps.net)
  - a. Please allow a 24 hour time period for a response.
  - b. Keep in mind Coach Burford's primary role, responsibility, and concern is with the SHS Girls Basketball team.

## AAU Teams

The Lady Junior Bearcat program will include every kid that is interested. Of course, any person may create a private AAU team and make autonomous decisions. However, these private teams will not be affiliated with the Lady Junior Bearcat program and will not be given access to any of the Scottsbluff Public School gyms unless they pay the daily user fee. The week-day fee is \$150/day, and the weekend fee is \$450/day. Additionally, they will not be covered under the Junior Bearcat Liability insurance policy. This is to protect our program and school from any potential conflicts or issues. Thank you for your understanding.

## Season Standards

The season for the teams should be age appropriate and a financially conscious commitment for parents. Our general rule of thumb is 1 tournament per every year in school. For example: a 5th grade team would look to attend 5 quality opportunities within the season parameters (October - April). **We do believe that less is more in many cases. We do not want to burn out our young athletes.**

## Postseason Standards

There must be an appropriate off-season. We appreciate the unbelievable time commitment that our coaches are willing to volunteer. Please understand that all Scottsbluff activities share athletes and time. All post-season activities should include and invite all Lady Junior Bearcat members.

### Postseason Guidelines:

Most teams develop a "core" which may get the opportunity to pursue extra opportunities. However, no team should exclude "fringe" players from these opportunities. This means that when "fringe" players can play or volunteer to play, they have priority to do so. It also means that some members of the "core" may have to rotate in and out in order to support most common sense numbers for a tournament (8-10 is ideal). The key to our numbers at the high school level is in the "fringe". **We need these athletes to stay out and stay involved.**

## Program Development

In order for players and a program to be successful, the **fundamentals** must be learned correctly in the beginning stages. It is far more important the players learn the proper way to play the game than it is to win the game. As a feeder program, the goal is to develop a strong high school program. Terminology and drills used at the high school level can start to be introduced during Lady Junior Bearcat. Our program believes in fundamental mastery, a competitive spirit, and how to be a great teammate.

## Player Outcomes

At all levels, 3rd grade through 12th grade, our hope is that our students grow as individuals and competitors. We will pursue the following player outcomes:

1. The development of meaningful relationships.
2. Students' ability to follow instructions and have high expectations for themselves.
3. Students' ability to be accountable for their actions.
4. Students' ability to be a great teammate.
5. Students' ability to positively contribute and represent their community.

***\*All interpretations and final decisions will be made by the Scottsbluff High School coaching staff. Situations that are not covered in this handbook may occur; in these instances, the coaches will make decisions in the best interest of the kids.***