

# HASTINGS TIGER HOOPS

## Parent Information: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### What is Tiger Hoops and when does it start?

Our first practice and parent meeting is Sunday November 1 at the new Hastings Middle School. Tiger Hoops is open to all girls in the third through eighth grades in the Hastings Public Schools (or who plan to attend HMS or HHS in the future). Last year we had over 80 girls from every elementary school and the middle school forming eight different teams. We expect to grow again this year.

Tiger Hoops will practice once or twice a week at Hastings High or Hastings Middle School from November through the end of the basketball season. The program is organized and run by the Hastings High girls' basketball coaching staff. Our goal is to promote hard work, teamwork and fun on the basketball court while developing the individual and team skills needed for these girls to be successful when they get to the high school level.

Tiger Hoops is designed to be a great basketball environment for girls at all levels of experience. Practices are organized and run by the Hastings High basketball staff, ensuring that the fundamentals are covered for everyone. Basketball novices will learn the basics of the game and get a chance to use them in several competitive sessions. Girls with more basketball background will find the challenges they need while still building their basic skills. We've designed a program that is flexible to fit the needs of different players.

### What does the program cost?

We've tried to combine flexibility to fit busy schedules and affordability to fit family budgets:

- Basic Tiger Hoops Fee: \$25 to cover practice time, instruction and a reversible game/practice jersey. (Players who already have a jersey from last year, pay just \$20.)
- League and tournament fees are divided among the players who choose to participate. Playing in these is NOT REQUIRED, but it does give the girls something to work towards. Girls can compete in some instead of all to keep costs down.

Over the last two years, no tournament cost any player more than \$14.

**Does my daughter have to attend every practice?**

We understand the reality of the modern family schedule. We know there will be times when players have to miss practice. That's fine; we just ask the girls to make it to every practice they can. The more practices the girls get to, the more they'll learn and the more prepared they'll be in games. In some of our most competitive situations sometimes a coach has to limit playing time for a player who is less prepared because of missing practice, but that is the exception, not the rule.

**Is this a traveling team?**

It is for those who want to travel. There is the basic program that involves getting together once or twice a week to practice basketball skills and have fun. Most girls will want to be involved in the games. Many of those will be right in Hastings. There will be chances to travel to GI, Kearney, and maybe other places for those who want that. Again, I hope the program has flexibility to fit all players who want to be better basketball players.

**Is this a 'select' team?**

I think it's better than that. I think it's a program that is going to teach basketball and help match the girls with the competition they need to be successful. For the more experienced and skilled girls that's going to be a higher level of competition; for the others, almost every tournament offers different brackets with less experienced teams. I think the best thing about Tiger Hoops is that it has challenges for all kinds of players.

**Are there cuts and try-outs for Tiger Hoops teams?**

No. We'll work to find everyone a place to play. Everything is dependant on how many girls want to play, but we anticipate levels of participation that will give us great flexibility in finding teams for every girl.

**How are tournament and league teams divided?**

We will divide teams according to the following factors:

- 1) We will try to match girls on a team to the levels of play available in area leagues and tournaments. Tournaments offer A, B, and C brackets based on experience and ability. Dividing teams by ability helps all players get a fair chance to play and improve.
- 2) Some teams will join Tiger Hoops already established.
- 3) Complications with player schedules (other involvements).
- 4) The high school coaches have every motivation in the world to find the best place for your daughter to play and improve. We can't predict who will have the size and desire to play high school basketball, so we will always try to organize teams with the best effort to make sure every girl has an opportunity to compete and improve.

I hope we will see it as a positive that the girls get to play with different girls from different schools; it gives them a chance to make new friends. The goal of Tiger Hoops is to form enough teams so that there is always an appropriate chance to compete for all the girls in the best environment possible for their level of experience.

**How is the tournament/league schedule determined?**

Both the league and tournament schedules will be determined by interest. We will send home a form asking each family to mark tournaments that work into their schedule and give us an idea of how many tournaments in which their daughter would like to be involved. We'll use that information to form the best teams we can for as many tournaments as possible. Again, that was pretty successful last year in getting the girls into several tournaments. We try to limit traveling as much as possible. Last year the farthest we went was Kearney; this year we may not have to travel farther than Grand Island.

**Will each girl get even playing time?**

We will work hard to give every girl an equal opportunity to contribute to the team. In leagues like the YMCA, usually the games are organized in such a manner that each girl can play roughly the same amount. In tournaments we tell our coaches to make sure everyone who has prepared herself by being at practice plays at least a quarter. It's not a perfect world, but we will always try to organize so that everyone gets an ample opportunity to play. In some of our most competitive situations sometimes a coach has to limit playing time for a player who is less prepared because of missing practice, but that is the exception, not the rule.

**Does my daughter need to be a 'star' to play in this program?**

No way. This program is designed for beginners and girls who have played a lot of basketball and everyone in between. I think Tiger Hoops can be the best of both worlds: a place for everyone to play and a place for girls who are ready for 'select' teams and competition. Our goal is for every girl to improve at basketball throughout the year, no matter at what level they start.

**How will practices work?**

Third and fourth graders generally will practice for 60 minutes. Older girls practice for 90 minutes. The first section of practice (20-30 minutes) is run by the high school coaches and dedicated to fundamental basketball skills. After that we will divide by grade level and teams for the volunteer coaches to work on team skills, like offenses and defenses. We think it gives us the best of both kinds of youth basketball teams.

**Will girls of different grades ever be combined?**

Possibly. We will do it if we need to because of numbers or if a player is ready for a new challenge. Often third and fourth graders compete together. The same is true with 5/6 and 7/8. Once in a while a younger girl might be asked to play with an older group.

### **Can sixth graders also participate in HMS intramurals while in Tiger Hoops?**

Absolutely. We hope that every 6th grade basketball player at HMS will participate in both programs. The HHS coaching staff has designed the goals of each program so that they work well together.

### **Do you need volunteer coaches?**

Yes. Yes. Yes. I think our coaches last year liked the set-up of the program. The burden of organizing practice, getting gym time, filling out tournament paperwork is done for you. We just need people who will work with individual teams and serve as bench coaches on game days. We think we're going to have multiple teams at all grade levels, so we're going to need coaches for each.

It will be important for the coaches to work together with others at their grade levels as team rosters change and numbers of girls available for practices change. We think our system provides great flexibility so that basketball learning can go on every night. Because we all practice together, if a coach has to miss a practice night, it is easy for us to work around.

### **How else can we help the program?**

If coaching isn't your thing, we will also need help taking tickets and working the concession stand at our mini-tournaments (Jamborees). You can also help by offering to drive other players to tournaments if their folks aren't available that weekend. Finally, we are seeking sponsorships this year to help with player scholarships and equipment purchases. If you have a business or are part of a service organization that would be interested in sponsoring a Tiger Hoops team, contact Coach Mays.