

## **A message from the Allendale, Ho-Ho-Kus/Saddle River and USR Basketball Boards**

Greetings to Highlands Travel Basketball Families,

We are pleased to provide you with information about the upcoming travel basketball season. Please understand that we're dealing with a dynamic situation which requires all of us to be flexible in the coming months and appreciate your patience and commitment to our program. Fortunately, we will be able to run our girls and boys travel program. The following information is fluid and could change at any moment contingent on state and/or government mandates. We will do our best to communicate throughout the season.

The Allendale, Ho-Ho-Kus/Saddle River, and Upper Saddle River Travel Boards have decided to merge the boys and girls travel programs into one program this year. This has been on the horizon for a while and with the success of the merge of the girls last year (Allendale, HHK, and partial USR) the time is now. This follows other sports that have already merged like softball, football, and baseball. The driving force is at the request of the Highlands varsity coaches. They would like to see the feeder towns kids playing together sooner than later which will help both programs in the future. Please note that the HHK/SR Boys grades 6-8 will not be merging at this time. The travel program is separate from the town Recreation Programs, and the REC programs will send out separate communications. Please see anticipated details of the upcoming Highlands Travel Basketball program below.

### ***Travel Program Tryout Information:***

**Travel Program:** Travel Basketball is open to boys and girls going into 3rd - 8th grade for the coming school year. All players must be residents of Allendale, Ho-Ho-Kus, Saddle River, or Upper Saddle River or attend a school that feeds to Northern Highlands Regional High School.

**Sign Ups:** To sign-up for tryouts each parent/guardian will need to complete the registration form and sign a Covid-19 waiver. To register for tryouts, please visit

[www.NHTravelBasketball.com](http://www.NHTravelBasketball.com) or click: **Register Here**

**Tryout Timing:** Tryouts will begin on November 9th. Only the player and the evaluators will be allowed in the gym. The tryouts will follow all state and local protocols.

**Tryout Gyms:** Tryouts will be held at gyms in USR and possibly some local private gyms.

### **Travel Team Selection:**

Tryouts are grade based with independent evaluators and coaches who score and rank players on dribbling, shooting, passing, defense, and knowledge of the game at "game speed."

Each team will have approximately 10 players. Independent evaluators and coaches will present the top recommendations for each team and rank the players who participated in the tryouts. The team will consist of the top recommendations.

All participants in the Travel Program must play with their grade level. Due to gym limitations this year, we will field a max of 2 teams per grade. The A and B teams will consist of approximately 10 players on each. The leagues we compete in subscribes to this format and division of play as well.

If a player who wishes to participate in the Travel Program is injured and cannot participate in the scheduled travel team tryouts, he/she can request a tryout with the travel team as soon as he/she is able to resume play, as documented from the player's doctor prior to December 20<sup>th</sup> (Player still must be registered by deadline in order to receive a tryout). If the player cannot return to action prior to December 20<sup>th</sup>, he/she cannot tryout for travel during that season.

If the player requests a tryout with the travel team, he/she will be invited to attend a full practice of the team and will be evaluated relative to the other team players by an independent evaluator and the coach. If the player ranks among the top players, it will be the coach's decision whether to add the player to the roster. If the player does not rank among the top players on the court, he/she will not be offered a spot on the team. In no case will another player be asked to leave the team to accommodate the new player.

### Playing Time:

We would like to make sure it is well understood that playing time will not be equal, nor predictable, throughout the season. Playing time is determined by the coach. It is typically earned on a weekly basis, and given to players based on a combination of things: skill, attendance, effort, schedule, opponent and other factors that will come up during the course of a season.

### Travel Team Costs:

There is no cost to tryout for a team this year. However, for anyone who makes a team, the annual cost to participate in the Travel Basketball Program is (does not include uniform fees):

- \$400 for Grades 3-8 (for teams without a paid coach)
- \$550 for Grades 3-8 (for teams with a paid coach)

In the event that the season is cancelled or shortened, the three Travel Boards will determine the amount to be refunded. Please note that the cost of uniforms cannot be refunded.

### Uniforms:

All teams will be wearing Highlands uniforms. Girls who purchased Highlands uniforms last year can wear them again. All boys and first-year girls will be required to purchase new uniforms.

### Travel League Information:

- **Boys League:** Will be overseen by the North Jersey Junior Basketball League (NJJBL).
- **Girls League:** Will be overseen by the Bergen County Town Travel Basketball League (BCTTB) or North/West Bergen/Passaic Travel Basketball League (still TBD)

### Games:

Both leagues anticipate starting December 1<sup>st</sup> and run into March (includes playoffs). We anticipate each team will play a minimum of 12 games. Games will be played at an indoor facility and will follow all state and local protocols. We will provide more details about the leagues and gym protocols after tryouts.

**Practices:**

You can expect 1-2 practices each week throughout the season. We will look to get you in a predictable routine once the schedule is finalized.

**Coaches:** The three Travel Boards will seek to have two coaches per team. The A teams will have a paid coach and a parent manager/coach. The B teams will have two parent coaches. All coaches will be approved by the three Travel Boards. The three Travel Boards aim to have coaches that have prior coaching experience and can increase our children's basketball skills and in building teamwork. If you would like to be considered as a coaching candidate, please make sure you volunteer at registration and you will be contacted.

Please look for a separate email when registration is officially open in the coming days. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to any of the Allendale, Ho-Ho-Kus/Saddle River, or USR Travel Basketball Board Members. In cooperation with the USR Recreation Commission