



The Challenge!

From my vantage point...of coaching at various (age) levels since 1993, including CYO, school “travel team” , AAU, HS freshman, Head Coach H.S. Varsity and 5 years at the college level, the biggest thing “plaguing” (local)girls basketball...is **not** lack of love of the game, **nor** lack of passion to compete, **nor** lack of work ethic by individual players to get better...**but rather** it is the lack of (the understanding of the importance of) spontaneity in the (girls) game.

Think about it. Guys play pickup at every opportunity they get, on any court, with any ball, winner stays on...and earn your “stripes” as you gain experience on the floor. There are no limitations! Girl’s hoops is a different story... as youngsters growing up...they play **when** dad or mom..takes them to the (indoor) courts...they (**only**) play with a coach screaming plays from the sideline, the most likely have to play with refs on the court...**everything is scripted**...and completely **non-spontaneous**. God forbid...little “jennifer” gets knocked to the floor, or takes an elbow, or gets fouled a little hard. The world stops.

The Solution!

I have four (local) accomplished women hoopsters that want to be part of developing a solution...and model for others to follow in the Capital District. The five of us will constitute the “team” that will look to start something new for local girls hoops..that can raise the bar...and ramp up the level and quality women’s hoops coming out of the capital district. Read on, if you’re interested as to what my thinking is...



My “plan” looks to develop a nucleus of 24, 10- year old players. (Since 11U is generally the youngest level for local AAU , this effort will not be “competing” with them...and will perhaps...gain their support. So...here is the who, what, where and when:

Who: Open tryouts will be held, during late February or early March (following completion of most of the “travel team” programs. Twenty four young ladies will be selected to join in the experience, which will combine fun, hard work and competition.

What: Once selected, the 24 ladies will form two teams...NOT necessarily an A & B team..but **rather** a couple of balanced teams...that will scrimmage against each other...and perhaps compete against each other in some local tournaments... We will attempt to “balance” the teams... rather than “stack” one, versus the other. In addition, a large/major portion of the “practices” will focus on

exposing the players to game fundamentals....[some examples would be] 1. how to recognize the opportunity (or conversely set up the opportunity) to attack the hoop...2. the importance of movement when the player does NOT have the ball... 3. the importance of foot work in playing defense, 4. how to become “automatic” in boxing out...and going for offensive rebounds...and.. 5. what to do with the ball , once a rebound is earned. This list will be further developed and expanded...as we progress.

When: The “teams” would “practice” two times per week at one or more local gyms...likely at U Albany, St Rose, RPI, or a host of other local High School gyms. They would also play at 5 local AAU tournaments, all taking place at U Albany. There is no need for a 10U team to travel...they can get their fill of competition locally... Plus..this entry level year..is not designed to “financially break” the players parents...but rather introduce them to the world of AAU.

Cost: The *only* cost to the participants...will be the cost of a tee shirt...that will be worn as their uniform...with black shorts... Again...cost should (will) not be a limiting factor in providing this opportunity for the ladies to participate. How can this be...you ask... the young ladies selected will (only) play in the local tournaments that I run at U Albany...so...the cost will be **zero**. Additionally, we already have balls, med kits, etc etc...we don’t need a thing! So..we take away the question of cost.

Additional: Lest you ask the question...this will be an opportunity for 10U players. **There will be no 11U team**...next year. If these kids are interested...they can find their own opportunity to play next year... This program is only designed to “light the fire” with these ladies.

So...this is the challenge as I see it. We are looking for a small cadre of motivated young players..that want to begin the process to recognize the opportunities and fun the game of basketball can bring.

