

Libertyville Lady Cats

Parent Meeting and Tryout FAQs (October 2017)

1) When and where are practices?

Practices are Monday, Wednesday and Fridays. Occasionally, there may be some variations throughout the season due to gym or coach availability but we will try to keep that to a minimum.

- 5th Grade Orange & 6th Grade Orange: 6:00-7:30
- 6th Grade Black, 7th, and 8th Grade Teams: 7:30-9:00

Practice locations can vary between LHS, Oak Grove, Libertyville Sports Complex, and others, although we try to keep LHS as our primary location.

2) What are the key dates for the season once it starts?

- 10/22 & 10/26 Tryouts
- 10/28 Teams Posted
- 10/30 Team introductions
- 11/1 First Practice- The season runs through mid March (NIGFBA end of Season Tournament before Spring Break)
 - 30 + Games (to be scheduled)
 - Divisional NIGFBA games
 - Tournaments (Palatine, Wisconsin Dells, others)
- 1/14/18 Lady Cats Tournament
- 1/27/18 Wisconsin Dells Tournament
- TBD - End of Season Banquet & Awards (generally in March close to the end of season NIGFBA Tournament)

3) Will there be cuts at 6th Grade and if so why?

We provide a structure for the teams and best practice suggests, but doesn't demand, 12 players per team. Based on the skill level of the girls that tryout, the determination of the teams is done by the coaches and independent evaluators that are part of the tryout process – NOT by the Lady Cats Board. While we'd love to keep all the girls, we have found that larger teams diminish the playing times and the overall experience for the girls so we'll try to keep to 12 if possible. Team placements on 6 Orange or 6 Black are made solely by the evaluators as described in the tryout process.

4) Why aren't there two teams at every level (7th and 8th)?

Delivering a great experience for the girls from a program perspective comes down to the availability of gym space, coaching, and the number of players. This year, we did everything we could as a board to try to accommodate two additional teams. We had the numbers and interest, and a lot of passionate people that were willing to step up to help us make it happen. Our dedicated coaches were willing to stretch to take on more too. Unfortunately, it came down to gym space. We compete with LHS sports (wrestling, volleyball, basketball, dance, etc.) as well as with the JCATS (boys version of Lady Cats) and are sadly out of space. We looked at churches, schools, health clubs, and the Libertyville Sports Complex locally, and even explored space in surrounding towns and sadly we came up empty. Knowing that

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there's so much interest, we're already exploring our options to see what we can do differently next year that will enable us to expand our available space.

5) What's New for this Season?

We are dedicated to continuously improve our program and this year we are focusing on 4 primary pillars to help take Lady Cats to the next level.

1) **Wildcat Pride.** We're working closely with LHS to make sure that we support them by attending games, adding an extra mixer this year where the varsity will attend, and introducing the LHS program to the girls.

2) **Mentoring.** LHS Girls Varsity players will mentor our 8th Graders. Our 8th Grade Lady Cats will mentor 6th, and 7th will mentor 5th. The friendships made within the Lady Cats is one of the best attributes of the program and building leadership skills through mentoring others will be an asset to the girls on and off the basketball court.

3) **Process and Policy.** We've added a Parent Code of Conduct this year, as well as a disciplinary code that you'll see on our web site shortly. We are following the same Parent Code of Conduct as LHS and will focus on parent behavior in the stands. Be a spectator and enjoy watching your daughter play! We will not tolerate any parent contact with the referees during the game, our coaches will manage that and we will represent Lady Cats and Libertyville well at home and away games.

4) **Modernize.** We're finally moving out of a paper based to a new digital world. Registration and scheduling are online this year and we're increasing our communication through social media.

6) Tryouts

The Tryout Process:

There are a lot of misconceptions about what happens during tryouts; how it works, who's involved, and what happens. We'd like to take an opportunity to describe the process and what you can expect.

Step 1 – Arrival. Tryouts are held in the LHS Field House. Please make sure your daughter arrives at least 15 minutes early. When you head to the field house, you'll be greeted by two board members who will give your child a practice jersey. Once they have their jersey, they need to hang out at the bottom of the stairs until we are ready for them in the gym. This is the point that parents say goodbye and will pick them up after tryouts. Make sure you have a girls basketball, that it's pumped up, and appropriate basketball gear (shorts, t-shirt, basketball shoes, water bottle, etc).

Step 2 – Number Assignment – by grade, the girls will be asked to come upstairs where they will receive a number. This is the number that the evaluators will use to identify your child. It'll also be the key way that we make you aware of your child's placement as we move thru the tryouts process.

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Step 3 – Warm Up – the kids will have a chance to warm up in the gym before the tryouts start. Once all the girls are checked in, the doors are shut, and we make sure that no one is allowed in the gym except for the evaluators.

Step 4 – Evaluation – the girls will be separated by grade level and evaluated with their grade only. Here's where the process splits for 5th Grade vs. others:

4(a) – 5th Grade – there are no cuts at 5th grade. We are simply trying to orient the kids to the tryout process so it becomes something they understand for future years. The 5th Grade teams are divided equally; essentially our goal is that 5 Orange and 5 Black are equally skilled. To make this judgment as best we can, the 5th Graders will not be placed on their team until the first week of practice is complete. This gives the coaches more time to work together and make sure that the teams are equally divided.

4(b) 6th Grade – The tryouts will result in two teams – 6 Orange, and 6 Black, similar to the way that LHS has an A and B team. This is done based on the skill level of the players. They are evaluated based on basketball skills, i.e. dribbling, passing, shooting, etc. as well as attitude, effort, and overall athleticism. All of the Lady Cats coaches participate in the evaluation process, as well as external evaluators that have deep basketball experience to guard against bias or favoritism. Your child's placement on a team is driven by the sum of those evaluation results. In the room, the coaches discuss players and make those placement discussions together.

4[c] 7th / 8th Grade – the evaluation process is the same as described as 6th – however only one team per grade will be rostered.

Step 5- Communication – After day 2 is complete and we receive the rosters from the coaches / evaluators, we publish the information to parents. You will receive a communication from Lady Cats if your child makes the team or is cut. We do this as quickly as possible. As part of the process, it's important to let us know if you do not accept the placement of your child. This may open an opportunity for a child that was previously cut. We usually allow a day or two to let things settle and to handle any issues that surface.

6 – Missing Tryouts – Tryouts are considered mandatory. However, if a child is sick and can't attend, an opportunity for a makeup session will be available. This is at the discretion of the coaches and the evaluators and will be made on a case by case basis only. We intentionally lengthened the time in between tryouts to allow for recovery from illness or injury.

Getting Ready for a Successful Tryout

Tryouts can be stressful but we don't want them to be. Here's some quick tips to help make the process easier:

- Be early. It gives the girls an opportunity to get acclimated, see their friends and relax.

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- Have the right equipment – pumped up basketball, basketball shoes, clothing for basketball (they are going to work hard in the gym so make sure they don't get overheated from clothes that are too heavy). Don't forget a water bottle!
- Have the right attitude – the girls should be focused, high energy, and attentive.
- Focus – the girls should listen to what the coaches are asking them to do, and do it, and if they have questions they should ask.
- Kids feel your stress and it impacts them – this is an opportunity to be part of a great thing. The world will not end based on the outcome. There are so many options available outside of Lady Cats to continue to play and to develop. There are a lot of success stories of girls that have been cut in early years that worked hard, came back a year later, and made the next team and went on to play varsity. We'll support the girls as best we can.
- Have Fun! Remind your daughter why they chose to play basketball, because it's fun! They will play better if they make the best of it, and their positivity and confidence will show in their tryout.